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ELFRIDA.

A

NOVEL.

ELFRIDA;

OR, E. Moore

PATERNAL AMBITION.

A

NOVEL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY A LADY.

VOL. I.

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ELFRIDA.

PATERNAL WISDOM.

THE heroine of our work was the only child of Lieutenant Overbury, a man, from his natural diſpoſition, much better fitted for an inhabitant of *heaven* than of *earth*, but by dint of reſolution, or as he himſelf called it, the united philoſophy of *experience* and *neceſſity*, was what the reader will find him in the courſe of this work.

His wife, the gentleſt of beings, had the *ſimplicity* to believe that the happineſs which her little family enjoyed, though of that *old faſhioned* kind, known an hundred years ago by the romantic name of *ſmiling content*,

was the only *true* happineſs; ſhe therefore caſt not the eye of deſire upon wealth or rank for her Ella. Having moreover renounced both the one and the other at her firſt ſetting off in life, to ſhare the fortune of her worthy lover, without once repenting her conduct, or repining at her condition, many degrees as it was below the ſtandard of mediocrity; this ſhe took to be a full and perfect confirmation of the juſtneſs of her ſentiments, and the wiſdom of her choice.

The world had, however, taught the Lieutenant a far different leſſon, for having laboured through a ſeries of years, under all the diſadvantages of narrow circumſtances, he adopted thoſe plans, and formed thoſe wiſhes for his daughter, which he had abjured for himſelf, when brought into competition with the ſofter bleſſings of exiſtence; in other words, it was his ambition to marry her to affluence, or his fixed determination never to conſent to her marrying at all.

He had contended ſpiritedly againſt mortification or diſappointment, in every poſſible ſhape, nor finally deſpaired of victory, until, upon a peace taking place, he found himſelf leaving off, *where*, at the diſtance of many a laborious campaign he had begun, with his little girl to participate in his obſcurity and confined proviſion.

Mrs.

Mrs. Overbury, who might have ſat for a Madona, was even ſurpaſſed in beauty by her infant daughter; the faces were not indeed unlike, but Ella's was more highly finiſhed, and to her mother's feminine graces, was ſuperadded the very peculiar animation of her father's countenance, that nameleſs ſomething that goes directly to the heart, and is the characteriſtic of ſenſibility and intelligence.

A ſlight, but in her huſband's opinion, alarming indiſpoſition, had brought the whole family to Bath, where they had reſided only ten days, in a lodging ſufficiently cheap and humble, to enable Mrs. Overbury to have the benefit of the waters, without greatly wounding their future accommodation, before Ella was taken notice of, upon the Parade, by a lady, who, as the attendant young woman reported, ſeemed ſtruck with the child's features, and enquired her name. Hearing her father was Lieutenant Overbury, ſhe declared herſelf a relation, and almoſt devouring Ella with careſſes, aſked her if ſhe would like to live with her, and ride in a coach; without waiting for a reply, ſhe added ſhe would come and ſteal her from her papa.

The good couple were at a loſs to conjecture who this lady could be.

Their ſuſpence was, however, of ſhort duration; for from admiring the child, and

looking forward to aggrandizing the ancient houſe of the Cluwyd's, in her perſon, the account to which this ſtranger thought proper to place her conduct towards her young couſin; ſhe wrote immediately a letter to the Lieutenant, offering to receive, educate, and adopt Miſs Overbury, provided he and his wife would make an ultimate transfer of their claims to her; but if that condition was not complied with, ſhe would find ſome other heir for the ample fortune which ſhe had to beſtow.

Mrs. Overbury was ſhocked at the cruelty, as well as arrogance of the propoſal; "Were her motive," ſaid ſhe, "a generous one, her manner of taking our Ella under her protection would be liberal, and we ſhould rejoice in it; but to wiſh to deprive us of the delight of our eyes and the joy of our hearts; to ſeek to rob us of our child's infant affections, by denying us acceſs to her, is an outrage againſt our tenderneſs, which it is not in human nature to pardon."

The Lieutenant, having revolved the offer in his breaſt, was nevertheleſs, convinced that it was his duty to advance his Ella's fortune, at every honeſt price; he therefore took the firſt opportunity of her mother's abſence, to ſet before her, according to her infant comprehenſion, the attractions of a ſumptuous inheritance, and concluded

cluded with ſaying, what a fine thing it would be, if Miſs Cluwyd ſhould make them a viſit, and take her with her in her poſt-chaiſe, to her ſweet country ſeat.

Ella, who connected every idea of her own happineſs, with that of her beloved father and mother, was in raptures to hear of ſo unexpected an opening of proſperity, and promiſed to treaſure up in her memory all the inſtructions ſhe had received, for ingratiating herſelf with her rich couſin; little imagining how dear theſe new-born hopes were to coſt her deareſt relatives, and the filial ſuſceptibility with which ſhe was endued.

The Lieutenant next prepared himſelf to win his wife's concurrence with an event, which he was determined to bring to bear, by the appointed time; for the lady had moſt graciouſly allowed him four days, for ſettling this trying point.

"Alas! my dear," ſaid he, as they were taking their uſual walk, the following morning in the grove, with their Ella as uſual, playing before them; having previouſly remarked what good health and ſpirits the child enjoyed, in order to give what he might ſay upon the ſubject, an air of unpremeditation;—"alas, what is it parents can properly call the love of their children; is it not to prefer their real and ſubſtantial benefit to the gratification of their own wiſhes,

and to promote their eſtabliſhment in life, even to the contradiction of their own pleaſures."

"Without doubt," replied Mrs. Overbury, "and I can anſwer for my heart, that to enſure my Ella's happineſs, I could forget, I could forego, every ſelfiſh concern."

"That is well ſaid," returned the Lieutenant, "there ſpoke the *mother* and the *friend*; for *true* parental tenderneſs, like the conjugal, is only the *perfection* of *friendſhip*, and it is poor on certain occaſions to remember ourſelves."

A ſhort ſilence enſued.

"Our Ella, for example," ſaid the Lieutenant, renewing in an eaſy and ſeemingly undeſigning manner, their converſation, "is a lovely child; and, partiality out of the queſtion, will make a beautiful woman; her capacity is uncommon; every polite, every elegant accompliſhment would be hers, if our ſtraitened finances withheld not the means. She has, moreover, brought into the world with her, thoſe marking features of delicate ſenſibility, that would be ſo many ſcorpion ſtings to her boſom, in a ſtate, either of abject dependence, or galling induſtry; you ſigh aſſent, and the fact, unhappily for us, is incontrovertible."

Mrs. Overbury making no reply, the Lieutenant proceeded:

"It

"It is beyond meaſure incumbent upon us, to ſmooth the way as much as poſſible before her."

Mrs. Overbury ſmiled affirmatively. "We know our ſituation," continued the lieutenant, "with us expires all we can call our Ella's proviſion."

Mrs. Overbury ſhook her head.

"You and I," ſaid the Lieutenant, leading her inſenſibly to a ſmall alcove, ſeating her, and taking her hand in an intereſting, yet unlarming manner, "you and I, my moſt eſteemed woman, through our manifold difficulties and diſappointments, if we would confeſs the honeſt truth, have ſuffered much more upon each other's account than our own; it is the never failing conſequence of mutual affection, and wounded hopes; and ought we not, ſhall we not, ſpare our Ella?"

"Do not fear me," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "teach me only what I can do, and judge of my maternal affection."

The Lieutenant looked half ſmiling, half diſtreſſed upon her; ſhe caught his feelings, and became ſpeechleſs before ſhe could finiſh her ſentence, and inſtantly recollecting Miſs Cluwyd's letter, conceived all her huſband had in contemplation, and pale and trembling, "Ella, ſupport of my exiſtence!" ſaid ſhe, and fainted.

Mr. Overbury was much concerned, but was not ſurprized at this effect; the firſt mention of a ſeparation from her child, he was well aware, would pierce her to the ſoul; but flattered himſelf, that when her ſenſibility had recovered its ſhock, and reaſon reſumed the rein, he ſhould be ſucceſsful in his attempt to make her think with him; that to *know* their child amply provided for, was far preferable to *ſeeing* her limitted; having argued himſelf into a ſtoical perſuaſion, that the worſt evils of life originate from the want of courage to diſcriminate, when we are called upon to make an important and critical choice.

Mrs. Overbury opened her eyes, and her huſband tenderly ſoothed her; "My ſevere taſk of duty, to myſelf and our Ella, is, I thank heaven," ſaid he, "performed; to have let the conviction of the conduct I ought to purſue, lie buried in my breaſt, would have been injuſtice to us all; reduce the object therefore, by an exertion of your good underſtanding, to the degree beſt fitted to your optics; ſudden and unpleaſing appearances will ſtartle us, but believe me, friend of my heart, we *have* the power, if we will make the effort, not only to ſoften, but to familiarize them to our feelings, and ſhould you hereafter find yourſelf inclined to diſcuſs the matter with me, give me the ſatisfaction of telling me ſo; otherwiſe I ſhall

ſhall conclude you cannot bear it, and however unworthy the mother of Ella Overbury I may be, compelled as I am, to deem your inability to examine the merits of a cauſe, before you decide upon it, I will avoid the mention of it for ever."

The poor Lieutenant, though more than twelve years the huſband of the woman before him, kiſſed the falling tear from her cheek, and haſtily retired to the ſpot where his little girl was amuſing herſelf, to conceal the ſympathy it excited, ſending the child to her mother.

When Ella preſented herſelf, her hands were filled with flowers, the niceſt and prettieſt ſhe could find, ſhe ſaid, to dreſs her dear, dear mamma's chimney.

This artleſs addreſs overcame the already weakened ſpirits of Mrs. Overbury, and threw her into an agony of weeping; whilſt the diſappointed child hung about her with a thouſand touching careſſes; until the lieutenant, perceiving their ſituation, advanced towards them, and his wife, not to give him pain, endeavoured to recover herſelf.

" We will return home, if you pleaſe," ſaid the Lieutenant, " we have been alone hitherto, but I ſee company approaching, that are much too well bred, either to underſtand or compaſſionate our diſtreſs; the early walk only can be a private one,"

"I am better, my dear," replyed Mrs. Overbury, "quite able to ſtay as uſual, I was oddly ſeized, and am ſorry for the trouble I have given you;" turning aſide her face, to conceal the traces of concern, ſhe was fearful it might ſtill wear, "I am now tolerably well."

The Lieutenant had choſen his time and place from the hope of laying his wife under a conſtraint in her grief, which he fancied would be a good preparatory ſtep towards its cure; for to be able to conquer the impulſe of ſorrow, in a ſingle inſtance, was, according to his idea, the next thing to breaking and regulating its force.

He had ſtudied the operations of nature in the heart, and believed the ſupreme *fiat* was not more omnipotent in calming the watery elements, than the voice of reaſon was deſpotic over the paſſions, if we would only give her fair play; that there were certain terms of exiſtence which all muſt comply with, or become ſeparate links of the great chain; and a fixed ſtandard of human felicity, beyond which if we attempted to riſe, we were plunged into the depths of diſappointment; but this gentleman's peculiar tenets will *ſhew*, though perhaps, not *juſtify* themſelves, as he is brought forward in this hiſtory.

Three days paſſed away in a kind of affectionate reſerve, when Mrs. Overbury beſought

ſought her huſband to relieve them both by a frank and open communication of his views and wiſhes.

"My dear," ſaid he, "it ſtrikes me, that whilſt we live to ſupport, to chear each other, the evil of our child's abſence, for her own advantage, would be a light one; and this is the baſis of my reſolution, where you are concerned; but be aſſured, was I the wretched ſurvivor, and a ſolitary exiſtence my only proſpect, I would break through the narrow fetter of ſelf-love, and though I muſt ſigh, my Ella ſhould avail herſelf of her good fortune, for I would ſigh in ſecret.

"It is over," ſaid his wife, after a ſhort pauſe, "we have hitherto upon whatever trying ground, ran the race of life together, and you muſt not now leave me ſo far behind; take therefore your own meaſures, and however vainly I may endeavour to *approve*, I will not *oppoſe* them; your example ſhall animate me, and to alleviate your portion of our common affliction, I will be unmindful of my own."

The Lieutenant, not to give her reſolution time to cool, wrote a polite note to Miſs Cluwyd, informing her, that they gratefully ſubmitted themſelves to her propoſal, and ſhould hold their little girl in readineſs for her change of ſituation, whenever ſhe was pleaſed to favour them with her commands.

Miſs

Miſs Cluwyd was in ecſtacies, but having properly regulated appearances, for keeping up the dignity of a great and condeſcending relation, inſtead of writing an anſwer, as their beating hearts expected, ſhe ventured to come the following day to take away her young couſin in *propria perſona.*

"All I aſk," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, before Ella was produced, "all I aſk is, that you will not extinguiſh the filial affection of our child, but ſuffer, good lady, ſuffer her, to love, to reſpect, to pity, and to pray for us."

"Well, well," ſaid the lady, in a ſomewhat unkindly accent, "as this is the only time we ſhall meet upon the buſineſs, I will forbear telling you how much I am offended by this indirect breach of articles; but remember the delicate thread by which your daughter's proſperity will be ſuſpended, for ſhe muſt renounce either *you* or *me.*"

Ella was now brought by the Lieutenant, and lifted into the chaiſe; "I proteſt," ſaid the lady, relaxing the ſeverity of her brow, "the child is the image, the improved, the beautiful image, of what you was, when you came down upon your recruiting party, and perſuaded my fooliſh couſin to turn campaigner."

The Lieutenant bowed without reply, and was retiring to an humble diſtance; "one word

word with you," ſaid the lady; he re-approached the carriage.

"I hope," ſaid ſhe, "you have had the common ſenſe to chriſten the child, Elfrida; though you have the folly to adopt her grandfather's abſurdity, of clipping his daughter's name into Ella."

The Lieutenant anſwered in the affirmative, "It is well," ſaid the lady, "henceforth ſhe will be called Elfrida; I will have no more *Ella'ing* in my houſe; it is downright vulgar, but *Elfrida* has good breeding in the very ſound."

The chaiſe now drove off; and this worthy man and wife ſat down to a ſilent dinner; Mrs. Overbury could not ſpeak; and the lieutenant was afraid to truſt himſelf in the character of a comforter, leſt his voice ſhould betray how much he ſtood in need of conſolation himſelf.

PATERNAL FOLLY.

But inſtead of introducing Miſs Cluwyd to the acquaintance of the reader, as will doubtleſs be expected, in due form, we ſhall leave her to introduce herſelf, in the two or three chapters of family peculiarity, and family incidents, which muſt precede all further knowledge of our heroine, or her new ſituation.

Lieutenant

Lieutenant Overbury, upon whoſe mind the ſplendor and privileges of wealth, had now ſo dazzling an effect, as to induce him to part with his only child, and to behold with firmneſs, though not without the moſt tender ſympathy, the unremitting regret of his wife, was the deſcendant of one of the many ſufferers in Charles the Second's cauſe, who were unrequited at the reſtoration; but, being a royaliſt upon principle, his great grandfather brought up his ſon in the ſame political faith with himſelf, and pointed out the army as his natural and ſole inheritance; HE was obedient, and his ſon's ſon walked in his ſteps; but by the diſcouragement of military ardour, after years of gallant ſervice, through each ſucceeding generation, the father of our heroine was compelled to retire upon lieutenant's half pay, which, together with a ſmall annuity, purchaſed with the whole of his wife's fortune, was, at the period of their alienation of their child, as Mrs. Overbury would call it, the whole of their proviſion; and hence it was, that with a ſoul formed to taſte and to diffuſe happineſs, he became the votary, and author of miſery, with what advantage to his little girl will be ſeen hereafter.

A recruiting party, when he was a young man, had brought him to the borders of Wales, where Mr. Cluwyd, a man of large eſtate, who knew his family, and the height from

from which it was fallen, invited him to his houſe, and preſented him to his daughter; commanding her to ſhew him every reſpect, to which his birth, military reputation, and misfortunes, intitled him.

Miſs Cluwyd was a no leſs dutiful than affectionate child, and would have made a point of fulfilling her father's injunctions, even to the wounding of her own feelings; but in this inſtance there was little merit in her obedience, the Lieutenant appearing to have undeniable claims to every polite, and her heart ſoon whiſpered her, every *tender* attention; no wonder, therefore, that her treatment of him was ſuch, as engaged his warmeſt gratitude; in a word, ſo very intereſting, and ſo very ſentimental an attachment took place between them, that nothing but Mr. Cluwyd's being entangled in a little affair *de tendreſſe*, himſelf, with a woman, only three years his daughter's ſenior, could have prevented his adverting to the natural conſequences; as the caſe ſtood, his avocations abundantly contributed to forward the progreſs of their friendſhip, by the opportunities they enjoyed of diſcovering each other's intellectual excellencies.

But though Mr. Cluwyd was thus ſomewhat unluckily drawn off from the ſuperintendance of his family concerns, he had two maiden couſins, at the extremity of the next village,

village, who *lived* but to ſupply thoſe ſtrange deficiencies in their neighbours.

As no human prudence ever ſurpaſſed what they could boaſt, where the male ſex was in queſtion; having never formed one tender acquaintance with that ſex, from their cradle to the preciſe time of their knowing Mr. Overbury, for which, indeed, their friends variouſly accounted, they were ſo *gracious* as to keep a *ſharp look out*, upon thoſe who did; in ſo much, that it was affirmed they had, in the true ſpirit of charity and benevolence, broke more matches, in ſeven years, in the village of their reſidence, and its environs, than either folly, avarice or ambition, had brought to paſs in twenty, and their ſucceſs and their fame, in this particular occupation, was ſpread far and wide.

Theſe ſage and buſy gentlewomen, the youngeſt of which, was the very Miſs Cluwyd that fell in love with the little Ella, upon the parade, were ſcared beyond meaſure at their relation and name-ſake's conduct, reſpecting the Lieutenant.

His daughter, ſcarcely eighteen, to be led into an intrigue with a young fellow, that, heaven defend them! was, of all others upon earth, the moſt dangerous for her to behold; for whatever was *out* of *doors* of him, as their favourite Shakeſpear phraſed it, was ſo infinitely attractive, that *they themſelves*, for

for a thouſand worlds, would not dare to tempt their deſtiny in his perſon; could it then be hoped that a girl ſhould be inſenſible? it was not within the proſpect of common ſenſe to expect ſuch a thing.

Yet how to act in the buſineſs was a nice and difficult taſk; for, to their certain knowledge, Mr. Cluwyd was too obſtinate ever to be prevailed upon to retract, much leſs to condemn, any ſtep, that in the fullneſs of his abſurdity he had once undertaken.

In ſo good-natured a cauſe who would not, however, exert themſelves? Every civil, every ſocial virtue demanded it of them, not to mention the ties of conſanguinity, by which they were bound; at length, after much perplexity and deliberation, they conceived the beſt card they could play, was to make the young lady the judge of the impropriety of her own conduct, by ſetting it before her in its moſt glaring, its moſt aggravating colours; they accordingly repaired to the hall, when they were informed Mr. Cluwyd was abſent, and with all ſuitable eloquence thus beſpoke her.

"We tremble, my dear Ella," ſaid Miſs Bell Cluwyd, the eldeſt lady, "for your ſituation. What do you think has preſerved us from making an indiſcreet choice, but avoiding every improper acquaintance? We might repeatedly have carried a knapſack, if ſuch had been our ambition, for your

your pretty military fellows are always to be met with; but our doors as well as our hearts were continually barred close against every *soft temptation* in the *shape* of a red coat; and we trust you will endeavour, for the honor of your family, to follow our example."

Miss Ella was abashed, for she believed she was detected; and yet she had never acknowledged, even to herself, that her heart was irretrievably gone; too honest, therefore, to deny, and too artless to conceal her feelings, she stood before their eyes a guilty thing, and the ladies were ready to expire with shame, at the disgrace, which it was apparent their young cousin was about to draw down upon their house; their house, which had been celebrated time immemorial, for the rigid prudence of its females.

"Ah me," said Miss Christiana, the second sister, breaking through the profound and painful silence, into which this discovery had plunged all parties, "the evil we sought to prevent has already taken place; and the poor child's peace of mind, the innocent freedom of her affections, is gone for ever."

"What a prepostterous father you have got," my dear," said Miss Bell, "we pity you, but most heartily despise him; to bring a smart young man to his house, and a military man too; whose *religion*, as the *vice* of the

the profeſſion is called, is *love*, and who would therefore have conceived it as derogatory to his character, not to have paid his devoirs to a girl, thus ridiculouſly thrown in his way, as to have turned his back, in the day of battle, on the enemy."

"It is the way of them all," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "and I dare anſwer for the truth with my life, that the idol of your admiration has burnt incenſe at every fair ſhrine he has approached, from the firſt hour he trailed a pike. You are ſo new, Miſs Ella, to the world, and its cuſtoms, that if you ever read ſuch a thing, I ſuppoſe you have let it go out of your head, that *love* is the *offspring* of idleneſs, and *thence* the *peculiar forte* of your ſons of war, whoſe lives are ever more devoted to the alternate ſovereignty of *Bellona* and *Venus*.

"Are you not too flowery, my ſiſter," ſaid Miſs Bell, "for ſo ſerious a ſubject; your language breathes the ſpirit of romance, and gives a *feathered edge* to your moſt important meaning; whereas the unfortunate fact is, that this girl has ſuffered her fancy to run away with her reaſon, and, I ſuppoſe, is ready for any irregular ſtep, the ſoft nonſenſe of love may ſeem to ſanctify."

Miſs Ella attempted to ſpeak, but words were denied her, ſuch words at leaſt ſhe could have wiſhed ſhould ſuggeſt themſelves, and what could ſhe ſay in ſo mortifying a ſituation?

a ſituation? the ladies, by their own authority, had conſtituted themſelves both her *accuſers* and *judges*; and were, of courſe, ill-inclined to liſten to her diſtinctions and diſcriminations; ſhe therefore, as the leſſer evil, opened not the door of her lips; for if her countenance betrayed her, what had ſhe not to apprehend from her voice, in her preſent diſcompoſure?

The ſiſters ſat motionleſs; nor indeed could any thing be more whimſical than the appearance of the whole trio.

Ella, with her eyes rivetted on the ground, the ladies with theirs now caſt up to heaven, and now turned upon each other with diſtreſsful ſignificance; then ſhaking their heads, with mingled pity and cenſure over the poor girl, as if bleſſing themſelves, that their *wiſdom*, *caution* and *unremitting watchfulneſs*, had preſerved them from equal *error* and *miſdemeanor*.

Miſs Chriſtiana at length exclaimed, "What can be done in this unhappy buſineſs? you ſee Ella's ſtubborneſs, her ſilent defiance of us and our advice; indeed, indeed, Miſs Cluwyd, I little expected that the good child we had only a few years ago in our arms, could have made ſuch bold reſiſtance to admonitions, of which ſhe herſelf was to reap the benefit; for, if you will not ſtudy to avoid your growing danger you muſt be loſt."

"We

"We thought ſo highly of your temper," ſaid Miſs Bell, "your modeſty, and your principles, that inſtead of rouzing your father from his lethargy, and pulling down the ſtorm of his reſentment upon you, we came to yourſelf, to win you, to conjure you, to be the guardian of your own reputation and happineſs."

"Yes," rejoined Miſs Chriſtiana, perceiving the poor culprit was ſhocked, "I repeat your *reputation*; for, unleſs this young man marries you, when the neighbourhood has talked itſelf into the firm expectation of that event, *ſlander*, Miſs Ella, will dare to ſhew her head, and nods and winks convey a meaning too terrible to mention."

"How forcible your language is!" ſaid the eldeſt lady, "my heart bears its agitated teſtimony, though this ſtrange, and I fear, ill-fated girl, continues unmoved by it; I have, however, a thought which if it diſappoints me not, may ſtill render us all happy."

The ſiſters ſhortened their viſit, from motives wholly unexplored by the amiable Ella; the eldeſt lady being eager to communicate her new-born idea, and the younger impatient to receive the communication. Miſs Ella Cluwyd, the moment of their departure, fled to her chamber, to relieve her over-charged ſpirits by tears, which ſhe was aſhamed

aſhamed to ſhed in the preſence of her wiſe relations; for, beſides the auſterity of their behaviour to her, ſhe was ſinking under the anticipated weight of her father's wrath; in plain Engliſh, ſhe was afraid ſhe ſhould never ſee the no leſs accompliſhed than worthy Lieutenant more.

The ladies were no ſooner ſeated in their carriage than the thought was aſked for and imparted; "it is," ſaid Miſs Bell with an air of ſingular ſagacity, "to ſend for this faſcinating youth to our houſe, and try what we can do with him. He is a hero by profeſſion, and who knows how far the dignity of romance may carry him in the ſervice of his miſtreſs; it is at leaſt worth the attempt; ſo we will ſummons him immediately, and talk him into generoſity."

Miſs Chriſtiana was delighted with the propoſal, for reaſons ſhe did not chuſe to canvaſs, even in her own breaſt; a card was therefore diſpatched, to beg Captain Overbury would favour them with his company upon moſt important buſineſs; and, until he could arrive, forgetful of their *own* danger in the rencounter, and alive only to the moſt liberal anxiety for the *ſafety* of their young couſin, theſe moſt diſcreet and unanimous ſiſters, conceived it might not be amiſs to *ſtrengthen* their arguments, by every improvement their *toilet* was capable of affording their perſons, and it was a ſtroke of

ſound

ſound policy, for, when we would have our words gain the *heart*, through the *ear*, we ſhould always take care to *ſecure* the *eye*, by the gentle violence of an *attractive exterior*.

A DISCOVERY.

The Lieutenant received this card as a thunderbolt; he had no doubt but the important buſineſs was of ſo fatal a complexion, as to interdict his viſits at the hall, under commiſſion from its maſter; and how to bend his heart to ſuch a cruel, but he could not deny, natural command, was a difficulty he was ill prepared to meet; he was, however, much too well-bred, not to ſay tenderly intereſted, in the Miſs Cluwyd's good opinion, to neglect their appointment; ſo dreſſing himſelf, likewiſe, at all points, though from a better motive than either vanity or a deſire of captivating, his ſole impulſe being a wiſh not to diſhonour Miſs Ella Cluwyd's favourable opinion of him, in caſe it ſhould be ſuſpected to riſe ſomewhat too high for family approbation.

The firſt moments of his arrival were extremely aukward.

The ladies bridling, and forgetting the dignity of their ſelf-impoſed office, ſimpering;

ing; the Lieutenant hemming, and with an agitation he laboured hard to conceal, awaiting his ſentence; though, if he had eyes to ſee, or a diſpoſition to comprehend, he would not have read any dire preſages in the turn of theſe good ladies countenances.

At length Miſs Bell opened the cauſe.

"It will, I muſt conceive, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "be beſt to come to the point at once; we have a fair couſin—"

The poor Lieutenant turned pale.

"And youth," continued ſhe, "in both ſexes, has its attractions. Mr. Cluwyd, with an idiot-like ſecurity, expoſes his daughter to the moſt alarming ſituation; your good ſenſe, Mr. Overbury, your humanity, will decide in favour of our endeavours, to ſupply that greateſt of misfortunes, to a girl, the loſs of a mother; and permit us, by our timely interference, to ſnatch our couſin Ella from a precipice; for, ſhe never can be yours, but by undoing herſelf."

"Not that we would be underſtood," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, touched to the heart by the form before her, "to under-rate your merits; we ſee, we feel them all; nay, it is, indeed, from your being ſo amiable, that we pronounce you ſo dangerous; it is a compliment to you, Sir, that we ſo warmly intereſt ourſelves."

"Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, interrupting this very flattering harangue, "what the

the world has ever good-naturedly lamented for me, my loſs of inheritance, it is a misfortune I never felt till now, that it not only forbids my looking up to Mr. Cluwyd's daughter with hope, but threatens, I can perceive it, to baniſh me from his acquaintance, and deprive me of his friendſhip—that it is natural to conclude a young man incapable of beholding ſuch beauty as—"

"Dear Sir," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "we muſt not hear you avow a diſqualification for poſſeſſing our friendſhip; every thing, but our couſin, you may command; and her, we perſuade ourſelves, you will promiſe never to ſee more."

"This, ladies," ſaid the Lieutenant, "is the moſt cruel kindneſs I ever experienced; to honour me with your approbation in every particular, except the one.—"

"Forbear," cried Miſs Bell, "forbear to mention a name that fills us, I had almoſt ſaid with horror; for the girl in queſtion is at once, too young to know her own value, and too tender to reſiſt ſolicitation; nobly, then, Sir, become the friend of her family, the guardian of her fame and happineſs; let me prompt you to the generoſity of ſaving, inſtead of deſtroying her, you too apparently love; ſaving the dear creature from herſelf, and all that train of ills, which, deſerving as you are, your union with her would bring upon her, and our beſt acknow-

ledgments, our beſt gratitude will await you."

This was attacking the poor Lieutenant on the moſt vulnerable ſide of his character. "But how, ladies," ſaid he, "can I, with propriety, aſſume the conſequence of withdrawing myſelf from a houſe, into which friendſhip and hoſpitality have alone gained me admiſſion. What will the young lady think of my preſumption, my vanity. Had I an imperial diadem—"

"Stop, Sir, ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "and if you wiſh not to be condemned, do not be ſelf-convicted; it is not, moreover, to us, that you need make profeſſions of the generoſity of your ſentiments, ſince the liberty we have this day taken with you is built upon that marking feature in your character; and, when we tell you we believe you capable of all that is good and great, you will underſtand how much we expect from you, on this occaſion."

"But the young lady, Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, "what a coxcomb, what an impudent fellow, will ſhe think me; I cannot, I cannot reconcile myſelf to a mode of conduct, that muſt impeach my common ſenſe; my reſpect for Miſs Cluwyd, my—"

"Leave all that to us," ſaid Miſs Bell, "we know the ſtate of the girl's heart, have diſcourſed her upon the ſubject, and are, alas,

alas, but too well convinced, there is no other ſafety for her, than from your giving her up, at our requeſt."

"And is it poſſible," exclaimed the Lieutenant, (forgetting, at that inſtant, the predicament in which he ſtood) "is it poſſible," repeated he, his eyes ſparkling, his face glowing with delight.

The ladies looked at each other, and were palpably ſenſible of their error in politics; but there was no recalling what Miſs Bell had ſaid.

However, ſoon recollecting himſelf, a cloud of ſoft ſorrow overſpread the Lieutenant's moſt intelligent countenance. "Ah, madam," ſaid he, addreſſing Miſs Bell, "what have you done? opened a proſpect of rapture upon me, by your aſtoniſhing piece of information, that I never before contemplated even in idea; and does Miſs Ella deign—"

"This," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "is building with one hand to pull down with the other; and I am ſorry my ſiſter let the unhappy truth eſcape her, for Mr. Overbury had much better have remained ignorant, if we can believe it probable he *could* be ignorant of our couſin's partiality for him; however, Sir, ſince you are inadvertently maſter of the family ſecret, do not render it a family reproach, but have the graciouſneſs, the

goodneſs to deſiſt, from this hour, viſiting at the hall."

How, Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, " abruptly, rudely, abſent myſelf; inſult the delicacy (for ſo it appears to me) of her I ſo highly eſteem; allow the acquaintance time, at leaſt, to die a natural death; exerciſe your eloquence againſt me. Ah, Madam, what a penetrating look (happening to meet the eyes of Miſs Chriſtiana) you read what I would ſay; but it muſt, it ought to be ſo; deliver the young lady's heart from its ſuppoſed dangerous partiality, (a partiality that is as dear to me as it is flattering) and let my withdrawing myſelf be with her knowledge—her—"

" Now, there is a rock," ſaid Miſs Bell Cluwyd, "you are going to ſplit upon; a girl of eighteen; her firſt love; the object ſo meritorious that *juſtice*, contrary to moſt deciſions, muſt *approve* what *prudence* muſt *condemn*; what is it you require, Sir, a miracle?"

" I would," returned the Lieutenant, " have our eternal ſeparation to reſult—to originate from—to—to—but pardon, ladies, my folly, and compaſſionate my feelings; my heart ſhall break before it ſhall betray me into diſhonour; I ſee, I ſhudder at my temerity; the only child of ſuch a family; for me—you are humane, to cruſh ſuch hopes—ſuch ſeducing hopes—and be aſſured you

you ſhall find me a man of principle, however wretched a man you may render me."

"You bind yourſelf, then," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana eagerly, "never more to viſit her."

"That madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, "I will not conceal it, is not in my power; my heart revolts at the idea; the method you meant to adopt, I thought, was a gentle, not a violent one; it is always better to untie than cut a knot; my quitting this part of the kingdom, which I pledge myſelf to do with all expedition, will more effectually anſwer your wiſhes."

"Quit the country," exclaimed both the ladies, in the ſame inſtant, but checking their emotion, Miſs Bell replyed, "that, Sir, give me leave to tell you, is a more deſperate means than any thing we would have ſuggeſted; cannot a line be drawn between the wide extremes of viſiting at the hall, of flying from a ſpot where you are ſo much eſteemed, admired and—"

"I fear not, Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, "I could not anſwer for myſelf in the ſame county.

"Fye, fye," cried Miſs Chriſtiana, "Ella, herſelf, could ſay no more; you was born to combat and to conquer; deprive not yourſelf, therefore, of the triumph due to ſo glorious a victory, but live

with us, receive our plaudits, our congratulations, and be an example."

"Your expreſſions, Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, "characteriſe a hero, but, upon this occaſion, I am a weak, an unhappy, and a wounded man; I will, nevertheleſs, endeavour to deſerve your good opinion, which is the utmoſt height I can aſpire to."

Coffee and tea were now brought in, and poor Mr. Overbury was compelled to liſten to a profuſion of ſmall talk, before he could diſengage himſelf from theſe enemies of his peace, theſe aſſaſſins of his tendereſt affections; cold, malicious aſſaſſins, under the maſk of friendſhip and generoſity.

The ſiſters, left to themſelves, were extravagant in their praiſes of the victim, and each ſecretly thought the other too *warm*; he was the fineſt figure of a man they ever beheld; and ſuch a face; nature was determined to ſhew her powers when ſhe beſtowed it upon him; and his voice too; there was no reſiſting its happy modulations; what a *lover* he would make.

"But, ſurely, ſurely ſiſter," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "that was an unpardonable lapſe of yours, to tell a young fellow you were ſeeking to detach from *a well-enough-looking girl*, that he was beloved by her."

Miſs Bell, who deemed it high treaſon but to *hint* that ſhe *could* be wrong, was on fire;

ſire; "and did I not tell the truth, my never-failing monitor and model of wiſdom, was is not the truth, I aſk you?"

"O my dear ſiſter," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, with a ſneer, for though theſe ladies were unanimous, when their friends and neighbours were concerned, they had their *ſiſterly jarrings* when *ſelf* was the object, "there are various kinds of truths, that ought not to be let out, but with the niceſt caution."

Miſs Bell made a ſcornful motion with her hand; "my quick feeling and quick reſenting Bell, however infallible you may fancy yourſelf, there are *painful*, *cruel* and *inſulting*, as well as *tender* and *encouraging* truths, with an endleſs ſtring of &c. that require a critical obſervance of *time*, *place* and *circumſtances* in ſpeaking them, which is the very conduct, my haughty ſiſter, that conſtitutes what we call *good breeding* and *good ſenſe*, thoſe beſt *guardians* of the peace of ſociety."

"If the ſecrets of all hearts were to be revealed," ſaid Miſs Bell, "perhaps,—but I ſhall leave every body's conſcience to point the finger; ſelf-knowledge, Miſs Chriſtiana, is both a very deſirable, and a very neceſſary acquiſition."

"Let the guilty bluſh," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "for my part, having nothing to hide, I ſhall ſpare you the trouble to ſeek,

by putting my meanings, and my *wiſhes* too, Miſs Bell, into unequivocal language."

"What then, you think," ſaid Miſs Bell—

Yes, yes, Madam, replied Miſs Chriſtiana, "I preſume to think much more than I care to mention; there are ſome very pretty *tranſparencies* in a certain lady's heart, which ſoon reſolves people's doubts.

"And what, my dear girl," returned Miſs Bell, (Miſs Chriſtiana was at the moment of this addreſs, in the *thirty-ſecond year* of her *age*) "is your opinion of the *tranſlations*, obvious to every eye, in a certain lady's countenance?"

How long this *ſiſterly ſnip-ſnap* would have continued, it is impoſſible to ſay, as it was no leſs ſuddenly, than totally interrupted, by the arrival of Miſs Ella Cluwyd's ſervant, a harmleſs, well-intending, ſimple creature, as ever the world produced.

The name of this young woman was ſcarcely announced, before the Miſs Cluwyd's were re-united in the *firm band* of curioſity and malevolence, "we will have her in," ſaid Miſs Bell, "and aſk her a few queſtions."

Hannah had only brought them a little box, juſt arrived from London, with a cargo, ſhe ſaid, for her maſter; and the groom, who had come with her, waited for her at the door.

"You

"You ſhall drink a glaſs of wine, Hannah," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "and tell us when you ſaw Captain Overbury laſt at the hall."

"If you would give me the *univerſal globe*," ſaid Hannah, "I durſt not ſtay an inſtant, for the duſk is coming on, and there are ſo many people that *walk* this avenue."

"People!" ſaid Miſs Bell, "what people can you mean; who is it, I beſeech you, that preſumes to walk our avenue?"

"O, Madam," anſwered Hannah, "thoſe that are above aſking either your or my leave."

"Not aſk leave," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "we will have them watched, we will have them apprehended, we will have them puniſhed."

"Alack-a-day, Madam," ſaid Hannah, "you little think who you are talking of; the *dead* care for nobody; no watchings, no ſeizings, and for why, becauſe they can ſlip, *hocus pocus* like, through every one's fingers."

"And is it *ghoſts*," ſaid Miſs Bell, "you mean, what childiſh bugbears!"

"May be ſo," ſaid Hannah, but to my mind, there are few things more fearful than the worthy young fellow who *hanged* himſelf laſt May-day, for *love*; or, the poor

maiden that *drowned* herſelf, in the canal, at Whitſuntide, on the ſame account."

"And would you inſinuate," ſaid Miſs Bell Cluwyd, "that we were the cauſe of thoſe accidents; is it poſſible that our good deeds can be ſo ill ſpoken of?"

"If *parting* true lovers," replied Hannah, "and driving them, mercy upon us! to deſpair and death, be *good works*, where will they ſeek their reward? not in this world, where they are hated and deſpiſed, and for heaven, I believe, they will never find their way there."

"Who can have put theſe idle and ridiculous notions into your head?" ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana.

"*Every body*," replied Hannah, "it is the talk of the country round; and, had I a ſweetheart, it ſhould go hard but I would keep the knowledge of it from all *miſchief-making* gentlefolks."

"Theſe are the leſſons you teach your young miſtreſs, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Miſs Bell, "I need not therefore ſay how unfit a perſon you are to be about her."

"Well, well that is neither here or there," ſaid Hannah, "I always thought I had not much to thank your good will for; but I cannot ſtay to *argufy* the matter, nor would it perhaps become me ſo to do, ſeeing you are my maſter's relations; though what

of

of that, either? for, if ladies will be forgetting their rank, to ſift poor ſervants out of their ſecrets, why then, poor ſervants are upon a footing with them, and ought to be pardoned all they ſay and do," and, having ſpoken thus, ſhe ran out to the groom, and taking him under the arm, ſhut her eyes, and was led by him according to promiſe, when ſhe undertook to come, until he told her they were fairly clear of Miſs Cluwyd's juriſdiction; "not," ſaid Hannah, "but a ghoſt might follow, if it *liked* it; but I believe," added ſhe, "that thoſe who do no harm, are not often troubled by them; for though I have lived in terror, from my cradle to this minute, I never ſaw any thing, as the folks call it, worſe than myſelf, in my *born days*."

The Miſs Cluwyds were bitter againſt this young woman, for the offence ſhe had now given them; and they concluded the evening with ſettling it to work her out, as ſoon as poſſible, from the hall.

A FRIGHT.

The Lieutenant, having paſſed through all the perſecutions of form and ceremony, no ſooner gained the outſide of Miſs Cluwyd's houſe, than his *feet inſenſibly* took the *road* that led to the hall; nor were his *hands*

leſs

leſs prompt (if he would have permitted them) to rap at the door, and obtain him an audience of his more than ever beloved Ella; but aware of the *impertinence* of the one, and the *preſumption* of the other, he checked them, and ſighing, retreated down a green walk, in a quite contrary direction.

Here he meditated and walked, and walked and meditated, until the ſhades of evening coming on faſt, he reſolved to go home without ſeeing her.

He, however, in the midſt of his *tris teſſe*, was ſo far benefited, by the knowledge of Miſs Ella Cluwyd's affection for him, that he was alternately oppreſſed with apprehenſions of the future, and overcome with ideas of his own conſequence, aſtoniſhed how theſe wonders could happen.

At length recovering himſelf, for lovers have their *lucid intervals*, he went back, juſt to indulge himſelf with one tender view of the dwelling-place of his fair miſtreſs, and was actually retiring for the night, when he perceived three fellows helping a fourth, by a private window into the hall, and, bidding him mind his ſignals, hurried away, with all the marks of ruffians about them.

The Lieutenant ſcarce ſuffered himſelf to breathe, for fear he ſhould be diſcovered, as four to one was a formidable majority; and a premature alarm, unarmed, and unſupported as he was, might have proved fatal

tal to the family, which he was determined, at all events, to preſerve.

He pauſed; he conſidered what was moſt expedient, when it occurred to him to return back the way he came, as leaſt liable to interruption, and call together his five recruits, whom, like a ſecond Captain Plume, he had won into the ſervice; his ſerjeant, a faithful fellow, and his little fifer, the whole of his forces, a plan he immediately carried into execution.

The young men and their deputy commander, who, for the honor of the halberd, had nothing of the *Kite* in his nature, as alſo the boy, that the Lieutenant was always very indulgent to, were happy in having an opportunity of ſhewing their zeal, in obeying their beloved officer's orders; they therefore ſallied forth with proper weapons of defence, to the ſpot, from which on proper notice, they underſtood they were to proceed to action.

The Lieutenant told the tale in a few words, and judging it ſafeſt to take the villains by ſurprize, he bid his men ſtation themſelves, as privately as poſſible, at given diſtances from the houſe, ſo as to be able to aſſiſt each other, if requiſite; but above all things, to keep a ſtrict eye upon the avenues; appointing the little fifer his aid-de-camp, to communicate the changes of regulation,

gulation, or articles of intelligence, which new diſcoveries might give riſe to.

Having ſettled this eſſential and judicious point, he ventured to approach the ſacred manſion, all uncertain, as he was, what ſort of reception he ſhould meet with; for his mind, ingenious at tormenting, united Mr. Cluwyd to his other enemies, nor could he perſuade himſelf that the ladies would have advanced ſo far in the buſineſs, unauthorized by his approbation, if they did not poſitively act at his requeſt.

On aſcending the ſteps his miſgivings increaſed upon him; and unable to ſtand the imagined altered brow of his friend, he concluded to reveal his errand to Mr. Cluwyd's valet, by way of introduction for him, and govern himſelf entirely as encouragement, or the contrary might dictate.

With this reſolution he tapped gently at the door, which was ſuddenly opened by Mr. Cluwyd himſelf, who was paſſing through the lobby to his dreſſing parlour.

"Hey-day," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, ſhaking him with more than uſual cordiality by the hand, "do you ſteal upon us at this late hour, without beat of drum, or other martial token of your friendly viſitation? Why man, I expected to have encountered a mendicant, inſtead of a hero."

The

The Lieutenant, whoſe heart was relieved from an intolerable weight, by this agreeable and unhoped for reception, was going to ſtammer out ſomewhat, by way of excuſe, and preparation, but impatient to communicate his buſineſs, he only ſaid, that a little matter, which required privacy, had brought him from Miſs Cluwyd's, and begged he would lead the way to his ſitting-room for the evening.

Mr. Cluwyd, without reply, returned to the common parlour, when looking upon the Lieutenant's face, he was, for the firſt time, ſtartled, by the anxiety depicted in every feature; "you have wound my expectation." ſaid he, "up to a painful height, ſo give me at once to underſtand what has befallen me."

The Lieutenant told him, in as conciſe and rapid terms as he was able, what he had ſeen, and what he had done as a preventative of the danger; begging him to conſult what ſhould be their next movement.

Mr. Cluwyd was now petrified with horror, and now tranſported with gratitude to heaven, and the humble inſtrument, as the Lieutenant called himſelf, of his deliverance, whom he ſtiled his guardian angel, and vowed to reward, if poſſible, equal to his merit.

"Jephtha, judge of Iſrael," whiſpered the poor Lieutenant's heart, "what a treaſure haſt thou; thy one fair daughter would repay millions of ſuch ſervices, though your life, and the life of your houſhold, ſhould be moſt happily preſerved by me."

Mr. Cluwyd wrung him again by the hand; when, ſuddenly ſtarting from his ſeat, he cried, "hark!" I thought I heard a ſound of diſtreſs."

The Lieutenant aſſured him all was ſafe and ſilent.

"Why you muſt know," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, "that Ella is a little indiſpoſed, and has retired to her chamber. I own I was alarmed for the moment, though it is not likely the villain ſhould begin his work already, or that my child ſhould be the firſt object of attack; let us however ſend for her, and inform her of her miraculous eſcape; we can ſettle our operations in her preſence."

"I can have but one objection, Sir;" "and what can that be," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd.

"Delicacy," returned the Lieutenant, "I would not tax her mind with the gratitude you profeſs for an act of common humanity, may I, therefore, intreat you will ſpare her the knowledge of my ſhare in the tranſaction."

"Thou

"Thou art a noble, but by my ſoul, Overbury," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, "thou art a very fooliſh fellow; a likely ſtory indeed, that I ſhould ſuffer my child to be ignorant of the hand that ſaves her;" riſing to ring the bell.

"A moment's patience, Sir," ſaid the Lieutenant, gently ſtopping his hand, "you forget that the niceſt caution is neceſſary; we muſt appear cool and unconcerned; nor ſuffer any one to diſcover our ſecret until we think proper to reveal it in our own words."

"Right, very right," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, "but methinks I am only half preſerved, until Ella is with us; beſides, it will eaſe my full heart, to ſpeak thoſe things to her, you will not let me ſay to you; next to her Creator, Overbury, ſhe muſt venerate you; for what has not a young woman to apprehend from midnight ruffians, in a ſituation ſo remote and defenceleſs as ours, when betrayed, I fear, by ſome domeſtic enemy."

The Lieutenant now touched the bell with all imaginable compoſure, "let Miſs Cluwyd's ſervant," ſaid he, "be told her young lady's company is requeſted in the parlour, to receive a meſſage I have brought her, and can deliver only to herſelf.

Miſs Ella Cluwyd was ſitting in her chamber in quite an undreſs, her thoughts wholly

wholly occupied by an object we need not now mention, though ſhe appeared to be amuſing herſelf with pictures in the fire; at the Lieutenant's name ſhe ſtarted, a name that gave her back the *image* of her mind, and beckoning to the girl to lead the way followed her in ſilence, and with the beſt grace her conſciouſneſs would permit her to aſſume, entered the parlor.

The Lieutenant had, with great difficulty, prevailed upon Mr. Cluwyd, in this ſhort interval, to conſent to ſit quietly, with his daughter, while the villain, then in the houſe, was ſecured, and allow him, at his return, to tell the ſtory his own way.

On Miſs Cluwyd's joining them, the Lieutenant was ſtruck to the heart by the change in her appearance.

A languor, that gave him the moſt tender alarms, had taken place of her accuſtomed vivacity of countenance; her dreſs beſpoke a melancholy negligence, and her voice was ſcarcely audible, the altogether of which was inſtantly deemed by him, ſo many mementos of her mortality; and he was ſo far right, that ſhe was actually dying, though by ſlow degrees, of the cruel wound the maiden ladies had given to her peace and deareſt hopes.

The Lieutenant affected great chearfulneſs, called Hannah's commiſſion, which had drawn her lovely miſtreſs down ſtairs, a friendly

friendly manœuvre to raiſe her ſpirits, and aſked leave to challenge her and her father at a pool of piquet; "I think myſelf ſufficiently maſter of the game," ſaid he, "to beat you both, though you ſhould unite all your powers againſt me."

Cards were ordered, when the Lieutenant, as if recollecting himſelf, ſaid he muſt decline the combat for a few moments, and (having firſt ſet them into play) to diſpatch a letter he had to write, when he would return, and compel them to acknowledge his ſuperiority.

He waited till the cards were dealt, looked with his uſual eaſe at each hand, and was careleſsly withdrawing.

But Mr. Cluwyd, oppreſſed with the ſenſe of the very important ſervice he was going to engage in, half aroſe from his ſeat, and though a look from the Lieutenant made him correct his motion, he could not forbear ſaying, in an under-tone of voice, "your perſonal ſafety, Sir, your perſonal ſafety muſt be your care, or you will deſtroy where you mean to ſave."

The earneſtneſs of her father's countenance, and an incomprehenſible ſomewhat in the manner of her lover, threw the young lady into great diſorder.

"O my dear Sir," ſaid ſhe, "as the Lieutenant ſhut the parlor-door. "what is it I ſee? tell me, kindly tell me all; nothing

thing can be worſe than my preſent apprehenſions."

Mr. Cluwyd could reſtrain himſelf no longer, and was ſupporting the fainting Ella in his arms, when the parlor-door opened, and the man of her heart entered, followed by his priſoner, and all the ſervants.

"I have promiſed you your life," ſaid the Lieutenant, "upon condition that you renounce your villainy, and give up your daring aſſociates; tell this gentleman, tell this lady, wherefore you ſecreted yourſelf in their houſe."

"To murder and to plunder," anſwered the fellow.

Hannah, who was ſupporting her young lady, at theſe words let the ſalts fall to the ground, being thrown into ſuch a tremor as to ſtand in need of ſupport herſelf, and was humanely taken care of by the Lieutenant.

"You, Sir," continued the fellow, addreſſing Mr. Cluwyd, "are to be married in a few days, and have jewels and a large ſum of money now by you, on that account; this was our bait; but the perſon leagued with us was to have had the young lady."

"O heavens," cried Mr. Cluwyd, "whom, what perſon?"

"Your valet," replied the fellow.

"And

"And where is he," demanded the Lieutenant?

"Fled," ſaid the fellow, "you may be certain, whilſt you was taking care of me."

"Then all, I ſuppoſe, is diſcovered," cried Mr. Cluwyd, "and you have confeſſed in vain."

Away flew the Lieutenant, and poor Ella's eyes and heart tenderly followed him, and giving the appointed ſignal, his Serjeant came to enquire his pleaſure.

"O miſery," ſaid the Lieutenant, "the leader of this horrid plot has eſcaped; he is Mr. Cluwyd's own ſervant."

The Serjeant, lifting his hat from his head with an exulting flouriſh, replied, "we have him in cloſe cuſtody; he would, it is true, have ſlipped by us, under pretence of being diſpatched by his maſter, upon important buſineſs, but fancying we read villainy in his face, we reſolved to detain him until we received orders, though he was for killing us all."

The Lieutenant applauded both his diligence and diſcernment, promiſing him ſuitable rewards; "deliver him up to me," ſaid he, "I ſuppoſe you have pinioned him; I will examine him before his maſter and the family."

They had ſearched his pockets, wherein they found a ſtiletto, a loaded piſtol, and a maſk.

The

The Lieutenant conducted him, attended by the little fifer, to the parlor of audience, to confront his accuſer, and ſift the buſineſs to the bottom.

And moſt diabolically did it unfold itſelf, for it appeared that *love*, ſuch as might characteriſe fiends, was the corner-ſtone of this bleſſed ſuperſtructure.

His young miſtreſs, the valet told his aſſociates, was ſo proud, that his paſſion, without their aſſiſtance, was hopeleſs; and knowing their livelihood to be rapine and violence, they having, for ſome time, infeſted a neighbouring county, he ſuppoſed, he ſaid, they would have no objection to cutting the throats of a whole family, for an equal ſhare of the very conſiderable booty, which he would put into their hands.

Having thus engaged his coadjutors, his next care was to hire a fiſhing-ſmack, under pretence of conveying ſome run goods; which ſmack then lay moored in a creek, at an angle of the park-wall; and he believed the three fellows that attended him to the hall were then on board, and would remain there, until the appointed hour of attack.

" And what," ſaid Mrs. Hannah, " what I beſeech you was to have become of me?"

" Why you, miſtreſs," replyed the villain, was to have been ſecured from telling tales,

tales, before we left the houſe, becauſe it was agreed on all hands, that one woman was quite enough to carry off alive."

Hannah raiſed her hands and eyes to heaven.

"But," continued the fellow, "you was to have ſupped with us firſt, for we intended to have made a jovial night of it, under this roof; as the dead could give no alarm, and the returning day would, alone, bring any enquiring perſon to the hall."

Hannah hung about her young lady's neck, as if the ruffians had been at her elbow, then, falling on her knees, ſhe bleſſed and prayed for her deliverer, and again threw her arms about Miſs Cluwyd in the wildeſt tranſports of terror, mingled with joy.

It may eaſily be conceived what were the feelings of the whole family upon this diſcovery; the Lieutenant, however, ſoon gave a new turn to their thoughts.

"Our work," ſaid he, "is but half accompliſhed; let us, therefore, much rather prepare ourſelves for the apprehenſion of the three deſperate wretches, who will ſpeedily make us a viſit, than loſe our time in amazement or complaint. It would be my advice, to make that Judas, pointing to the valet, the decoy, and allure them in, by proper pauſes, at one of the ſide windows, when we may eaſily put it out of their power to do miſchief,

miſchief, not by ſlaughter, but fetters, until we can give them up to juſtice; and if Miſs Cluwyd (turning to that young lady) will have the courage to retire to her chamber, attended by her ſervant, ſhe may ſleep in ſecurity, for I will place a centinel at her door; "will you do me the honor, Madam," offering her his hand, "to let me conduct you thither."

Ella roſe from her chair, and would have walked, but her trembling beſpoke the ſupport ſhe ſtood in need of; "My arm, Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, condeſcend to make my arm ſerviceable to you."

"What has it not done for me," ſaid the young lady, as they aſcended the ſtairs, Hannah following, holding faſt by her miſtreſs' gown, "what has it not done for me; my life, my everlaſting peace of mind, Sir, I owe to your protection."

"And have I not my reward," ſaid the Lieutenant, reſpectfully kiſſing her hand as he retired; "one of thoſe ſmiles! I cannot bear your profeſſions of gratitude (for ſhe attempted again to thank him) to me Madam, they are moſt improperly addreſſed, for my own ſoul is not dearer to me than your ſafety; I live, Miſs Cluwyd, but in your happineſs."

The Lieutenant trod air as he returned, "My good ladies," ſaid he, "how much I am indebted to you for inſpiring me with this

this preſumption; had you not given me hope I ſtill had ſighed in ſilence. But where will this dream of delight end? not, I truſt, in the deſtruction, as you have cruelly propheſied, of her I love."

Miſs Cluwyd declaring a diſinclination for going to bed, Hannah ſeated herſelf upon the carpet, cloſe at her feet, and her deliverance employing her whole mind, except now and then that the image of her deliverer would ſteal acroſs it; ſhe was profoundly ſilent.

A tap at the chamber-door threw poor Hannah into new panics; "Mercy upon us," ſaid ſhe, "here they come!"

But ſuch was Miſs Cluwyd's confidence in the Lieutenant's care of her, that undiſmayed, ſhe, herſelf, enquired who was there.

"To make you perfectly eaſy, ſaid the Lieutenant, "I have brought my Serjeant to guard you, a faithful and valiant fellow, who would die before any harm ſhould happen to you—(the Serjeant looked all his commander ſaid of him) he will walk the lobby till morning," continued the Lieutenant, "But I thought it would be pleaſing to you to be an eye-witneſs that I had kept my word with you; and I now, once again, preſume to recommend repoſe to you; your health will ſuffer unleſs you have ſome ſleep."

"This attention, Sir," ſaid Miſs Clu-wyd, is only an additional proof to me that I have not miſtaken your character, you are equally humane and brave."

"Good night, my dear Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, "let your repoſe thank me, you muſt look well in the morning, if you wiſh me to believe I have the ſmalleſt influence with you;" a ſweet good night, ſaid he, mentally, for he only bowed and ſhut the door; and Ella reſumed her ſeat and her former ſilence.

Hannah being now, however, tolerably relieved from her fears, talked enough for both her miſtreſs and herſelf; ſhe did not believe there was ſo handſome, or ſo heroic a man in the world as Captain Overbury; and, was ſhe a lady, ſhe would chooſe him, amidſt millions, for a huſband. It was a fine thing, indeed, that young people muſt not be in love with ſo much merit without a crime, ſhe ſuppoſed, whereas *old people* could marry whom they liked, and the more unfitter for them, it ſeemed the more to pleaſe their fancy; but before ſhe would truckle to e'er a mother-in-law in the kingdom, ſhe would take up with the firſt he that aſked her; not that Captain Overbury was one of thoſe to be ſnapped at for by-ends, no by her truly; for a ducheſs, nay a queen might be proud to call him huſband."

Finding

Finding her miſtreſs did not interrupt her, though ſhe turned her eyes full upon her, but that taking her watch from her ſide, and laying it upon the table before her, ſhe remained ſilent, Hannah proceeded.

"Ah, how the dear gentleman looked, when he took leave of you at this door; at me, I mean, as much as to ſay, my life, Mrs. Hannah, (meaning your health, Madam) is in your hands; and then his fine countenance, now pale, and now red, when he came in and found you fainting and recovering."

"My good girl," ſaid Miſs Cluwyd, "what nonſenſe you are talking; but your fright has diſturbed your mind, and Mr. Overbury happening to be—"

"Aye, aye, Madam," ſaid Hannah, "you may carry it off as you pleaſe, and think me impudent for ſpeaking my mind, but I do believe heaven intends more than I ſhall mention, by ſending the Captain juſt in the nick of time to ſave us; and moreover, if it is your deſtiny to come together, who ſhall gainſay it? my maſter loves him, and now owes him his all."

"Stop this torrent of folly," ſaid Miſs Cluwyd, "and deſire the good man at the door to inform us when all is over, it is now almoſt one o'clock."

"Who *me*, Madam!" ſaid Hannah. "me open the door! you might as well bid me

die at your feet; unleſs I was to hear Captain Overbury on the outſide, when right willingly would I obey you."

Miſs Cluwyd ſmiled, and was obliged herſelf to ſpeak her requeſt to the Serjeant, who promiſed to be punctual to his intelligence.

The family manœuvres were ſucceſsful; the five villains were put under the guard of the recruits, and the houſe once more reſtored to ſafety and tranquillity.

Miſs Cluwyd then begged Hannah would go down to the parlor, and ſee how her father and Mr. Overbury were employed; but Hannah proteſted ſhe would as ſoon give her head off her ſhoulders, for that it was in vain to tell her there was but five villains, when her imagination had multiplied them to five hundred; "and me too, Madam," cried ſhe, "that they had fixed to murder; no, no, never will I walk half the length of a ſingle lobby, in this houſe again, unleſs I have ſome one with me" at which moment hearing a foot upon the ſtairs, Hannah vehemently inſiſted upon it it was a thief, and Miſs Cluwyd's heart told her it was a friend, and immediately in well-known accents, the Lieutenant ſaid:

"I find you are up, Miſs Cluwyd, notwithſtanding all my good advice, and your father having ordered coffee, has ſent me, if you

you cannot repoſe yourſelf, to convoy you to the parlor."

"Meſſenger of glad tidings," ſaid Miſs Cluwyd, opening the door, "I ſhall rejoice to follow you, for no ſleep can I take this night, and company will help to diſſipate the confuſion of ſpirits I am unable to get the better of;" ſhe gave her hand to the Lieutenant, when Hannah, ruſhing forward to relieve her own feelings, preceded them to the parlor, and introduced them to her maſter, ſaying, "here they come, Sir, leading each other as kind and as harmleſs as the babes in the wood; and I moſt humbly beſeech you to let me do the footman's office at the tea-table, for indeed, and indeed, your Honor, I dare not leave the room where Captain Overbury is;" they all ſmiled, and Hannah, determined to be ſafe, took her ſtand behind Mr Overbury's chair, watching, alternately, the countenance of her maſter and his daughter, to ſee if they appeared apprehenſive of any thing.

Mr. Cluwyd again called the Lieutenant his friend, his deliverer, his own boy, and appeared in that harmony of humor ſo propitious, in general, to *humble petitioners*, that it was the very moment, of all others, the Lieutenant would have choſen, had he not been an unqualified man, to ſolicit his conſent for addreſſing his daughter, but in

his ſituation he had only to be ſilent and reſigned.

Having drank their coffee and chatted a ſhort time, Mr. Cluwyd laid himſelf down upon a ſopha, and fell aſleep; and Hannah being ordered to draw her chair into a receſs, near where the Captain was ſeated, fell aſleep alſo, as her ſnoring ſoon informed them, when Ella, conſcious how critical her tête-a-tête with the Lieutenant was become, bluſhed and heſitated, though converſing with him upon the moſt trifling ſubjects.

The combat in the Lieutenant's breaſt, between honor and love, hope and apprehenſion, was nobly ſuſtained by him for ſome time, but love, as is uſual upon ſuch occaſions, became at length triumphant; he took her unreſiſting hand, and the ſofteſt of declarations was trembling upon his lips, when Hannah gave a moſt fearful ſcream, having dreamed the ruffians were murdering her; a ſcream that not only awaked Mr. Cluwyd, and effectually broke up the touching ſcene, but brought the Serjeant and the fifer into the parlor, to enquire the cauſe, and Hannah beſought her maſter to let the boy play them a tune or two until day, for that muſic always did her heart good, and ſhe was ſure ſhe never ſtood more in need of ſomething to chear and ſettle her ſpirits in her whole life."

The

The little fifer did his beſt to pleaſe his Captain's young lady; for, it was all over the houſe that Miſs Cluwyd and he were born for each other.

The day at length dawned, and the priſoners were ſent off under the conduct of the Serjeant and the recruits, to the county-goal, where they had four months to lie, before they could take their trial.

A WEDDING.

The report of the intended robbery, with every tremendous particular, was, upon the wings of the morning, ſpread abroad, nor did the gallant conduct of the Lieutenant loſe an iota of its merit in this circulation.

The diſcreet ladies felt a kind of defeat in the preſervation of their relations by the Lieutenant's means.

"What weakneſs and folly will now," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "be dignified with the pompous epithets of friendſhip and gratitude! and we ſhall have *all* our work, with the two ſimple lovers, to do over again."

"We will, nevertheleſs," ſaid Miſs Bell, "not be diſcouraged, for it is a match that was never made in heaven, and ſhall not take place on earth if I am able to prevent it; we muſt draw him off from his preſent

dangerous ground, and avail ourſelves of thoſe virtues he ſo eminently poſſeſſes, ſenſibility and generoſity.

Mr. Cluwyd would have heaped favors upon the Lieutenant's head (having nobly recompenſed all who aſſiſted in his deliverance) but the Lieutenant told him he ſhould conſider himſelf affronted by every mention of rewarding him, for having made himſelf happy, by a common act of humanity, indeed, but as it was his friend's family, that heaven had made him inſtrumental in ſerving, his ſelf gratulations were above every thing in Mr. Cluwyd's power to confer upon him; except, as his ſighing heart ſuggeſted, he could prevail upon himſelf to give him his daughter.

Enlightened as the Lieutenant was by the diſcovery of Miſs Cluwyd's tender ſentiments, he could trace them in her face, her voice, her manner of addreſſing him, not an article of which would have been obſerved by him, if his eyes had not been officiouſly opened, by the very parties that were labouring hard to blind him.

Having a key to her conduct, he read partiality in many of thoſe very turns which before had held him at a diſtance, chilled his hopes, and fettered his aſpirations; a good hint, we muſt conceive, for all thoſe who may engage in a ſimilar attempt, to guard well a ſecret of ſuch importance to a lover,

lover, as the knowledge of his miſtreſs's favorable inclination towards him; for, the moſt ſucceſsful of methods, for ſubduing a growing paſſion, is by inſinuating doubts of a return, and impediments inſurmountable; impediments that lower the *vanity*, by wounding the *ſelf-love* of the individual, and ſhut the door of the heart againſt flattering ideas, the grand requiſites for carrying on the ſoft ſiege of the mind.

As ſoon as Mr. Cluwyd had recovered his fright, he haſtened to fulfil his matrimonial engagement, and, accompanied by his young wife, returned in a few days to the hall, where Ella was commanded to receive and acknowledge her mother.

Miſs Cluwyd lamented that the death of her natural and moſt beloved parent gave her father an opportunity of introducing a new miſtreſs into his family; but, as by that unfortunate event, he became entitled to make a ſecond choice, ſhe did not think herſelf impowered to wear any exterior marks of diſapprobation.

She, therefore, wiſhed and endeavoured to win Mrs. Cluwyd's friendſhip, but as, according to the proverb, "the injured *may* forgive, but the injurer never *can*," ſo, in proportion to the ſweet and amiable conduct of her daughter-in-law, this new created lady, making her own mind the meaſure of all things, conceived a mortal hatred to her;

ſecretly imputing hypocriſy and deceit to one of the moſt open and ingenuous of hearts.

The fact was, that Mrs. Cluwyd, without a ſingle ray of underſtanding, poſſeſſed a large ſhare of cunning, and was almoſt the vaineſt of the vain.

To be accompanied by a tall, handſome girl, wherever ſhe went, was in itſelf ſufficiently mortifying to be impatiently borne; but when it was remembered by her, how much it was that girl's intereſt to be a ſpy upon her actions, and no very favourable obſerver of her frequent ſallies of vivacity, ſhe was ſorry the valet had not carried her off, or that ſhe was not buried in the depth of the ſea, or that ſome good-natured devil did not fly away with her.

The Lieutenant was alſo her averſion, a half-ſouled, low-bred fellow, ſhe called him, to be not only blind to her perfections, but hurt (ſhe could perceive it) by her advancement; ſhe would find ſome expedient to remove him.

Nor were the Miſs Cluwyds leſs objects of her diſguſt and ill-will; for they had, ſhe was informed, mentioned her with diſreſpect, ſince her marriage, beſides doing all they poſſibly could to prevent her coming into the family; ſhe would give worlds for a method of tormenting them all.

In

In this *benevolent* ſtate of mind ſhe diſcovered that the maiden ladies dreaded no evil under the ſun, equal to an union between Ella and the Lieutenant.

When the knowledge of her power for ſtriking an univerſal blow, broke upon her ſenſes like a flaſh of lightning, ſhe would eſpouſe the cauſe of the coxcomb ſoldier, and the over-grown girl; not doubting by her influence over her huſband, when ſhe had gratified her revenge on Miſs Cluwyds by their marriage, but ſhe ſhould accompliſh her malicious wiſhes towards the young people, by having them caſt out from his houſe and heart, to ſmart under all the inconveniencies of a narrow proviſion.

She began this pious work with telling Miſs Cluwyd that ſhe had diſcovered her tenderneſs for the Lieutenant, and was much too ſenſible a woman to blame her. He was, ſhe ſaid, a very pretty fellow, and the wife of a military man was a life of variety, which, to ſome minds, was far preferable to the ſame dull unvarying round, however gilded by affluence; for her part, ſhe did not ſee where the objection could lay, but that ſhe found Mr. Cluwyd had objections, which were both cruel and unjuſt, after having brought them ſo frequently together, and ſo induſtriouſly promoted their mutual attachment.

Ella

Ella looked down and was profoundly ſilent.

" Why to be ſure," ſaid Mrs. Cluwyd, " a mother-in-law ſeems a ſomewhat ſingular confidant; but I think, Miſs Ella, you need not heſitate to truſt me with a ſecret I have ſtolen from you, and which, if I was hoſtilely diſpoſed, I could infallibly make an ill-natured uſe of with your father."

Ella attempted to obviate this charge.

" I will not be inſulted, Madam," ſaid the lady, " by the diſavowal of a paſſion, which every man that runs may read, ſo that if you will not confeſs and confide in me, I muſt beg you will not ſpeak at all; that I am your friend is clearly proved by my not being your enemy; for it is as obvious I have the *power* of being the latter, as that I have the *will* to be the other."

Miſs Cluwyd's heart allowed ſhe *talked* her kind diſpoſitions very well, but ſhe could not bring herſelf to reſt upon her friendſhip, there was ſomething forced in her manner, and unnatural in her mode of conduct, to deſert the intereſt of a huſband, in favor of a girl's inclinations, for whom it was not probable ſhe could have much regard; theſe reflections had great weight with her, and ſhe preferred incurring her diſpleaſure, to putting it to the hazard that ſhe might betray her.

Not

Not ſucceeding upon this ground, Mrs. Cluwyd, with equal judgment and addreſs, turned all her artillery againſt the poor Lieutenant's head, invited him perpetually to the hall, and was ever finding pretences to leave Ella and him alone; a behaviour this gentleman, with great naiveté, ſuppoſed to originate from two virtues, which were not ſo much as upon her acquaintance-liſt, namely, *modeſty* and *gratitude*, from conceiving herſelf, in the firſt inſtance, either unqualified to converſe with them, or a reſtraint, from the nature of her character, upon their friendly converſation; and that the reaſon of his being ſo welcome a gueſt at the hall was, from her deſire of obliging thoſe whom her huſband approved; yet, notwithſtanding all theſe agreeable circumſtances, it was Mr. Overbury's *fixed reſolution* to bid adieu to the weſtern counties, as ſoon as the aſſizes were over; and from exceſs of tenderneſs, baniſh himſelf for ever from the woman he adored.

The maiden ladies laid a thouſand traps to draw him to their houſe, and were ſometimes ſucceſsful.

His aſſurances of his unaltered ſentiments, with reſpect to the neceſſity of withdrawing himſelf from Miſs Cluwyd's acquaintance, and his adhered-to intention of conforming to that neceſſity the moment it was in his power, gave them a mixed ſenſation of pleaſure

ſure and pain; and turned all their inventive faculties to one point, the ſtriking out ſome happy medium of conduct for him, when his hour of departure drew near; they could not indeed but acknowledge, though it was both with reluctance and mortification they did it, that it would appear ſtrange, now there was a *woman* to ſhare his viſits at the hall, with their young relation, to abſent himſelf, until the buſineſs he was plunged into was over, and he was enabled to aſſign a plauſible reaſon for his change of ſituation.

Miſs Bell Cluwyd, during this period, having, as ſhe told her ſiſter, viewed the conſequences of an union between the Lieutenant and their couſin, in all its parts and combinations, was ſo clearly perſuaded it would be *unfortunate*, that, in order to prevent it the more effectually from taking place, ſhe was almoſt tempted, ſhe ſaid, to have him herſelf.

Miſs Chriſtiana was breathleſs with aſtoniſhment, not at her ſiſter's *affection* for the Lieutenant, for that ſhe had long before diſcovered, but at her cool and confident declaration of it, to one who had juſt as good a right to chooſe him for herſelf, and perhaps quite as *prompt* an *inclination* ſo to do, though ſhe had ſuch power over her words and actions as *never* to expoſe herſelf, and ſhe heartily wiſhed ſhe could ſay as much for her ſiſter. "Let

"Let me underſtand you, ſiſter" ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "you Bell Cluwyd would be *glad* to marry Captain Overbury."

"You have not, Miſs Chriſtiana," ſaid Miſs Bell, "given yourſelf much trouble, my dear, in the *choice* of your words, but be it ſo, for it is only the different way of expreſſing the ſame thing, that makes it pleaſing or offenſive to the ear; the meaning is neither the better nor the worſe for it."

"But will you favor me with ſome of your beſt motives for this ſtep? ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana.

"Becauſe," returned the lady, "I am as perfectly miſtreſs of my perſon, as I am of my fortune."

"And it is full time you ſhould, my dear Bell, for, not to flatter you, it is now a tolerable period ſince you attained to years of maturity."

"Malicious Chriſtiana; and where is the great difference between us? but to return to the Lieutenant; I can enrich the very man, and lift him into conſequence, that Ella Cluwyd, by not having a ſingle ſhilling, would diſtreſs and deſtroy; and if ever there was merit in a good-natured action, there muſt be merit in making a worthy individual happy, and ſaving a not altogether unamiable girl from deſtruction."

Miſs Chriſtiana ſmiled ſarcaſtically, and could not, for the ſoul of her, applaud this benevolent

benevolent heroiſm, as her ſiſter ſeemed to think ſhe ought; ſatisfied, however, of the juſtneſs and generoſity of her ſentiments, Miſs Bell ſettled it, in her own breaſt, to take the Lieutenant's heart by ſurprize, and deſpiſe the world's opinion, the world's report, and the world's comments (in which it was plain ſhe included thoſe of Miſs Chriſtiana) which were only proper fetters, ſhe ſaid, for girls and boys.

Miſs Chriſtiana execrated her ſiſter's vanity privately, but flattered herſelf that ſhe had nothing to fear from her manœuvres; for it was impoſſible, according to her eſtimate of perſonal and mental attractions, that her ſiſter could have any chance of gaining an admirer, where ſhe deigned to appear; not to mention the difference of their age, which, though *five whole years*, the poor infatuated Bell, as Miſs Chriſtiana would often call her to the ſervant, affected to conſider as a mere feather in the ſcale, but upon which, this *youngeſt ſiſter* built, as upon a *rock*, for certainty of preference.

But this was no time for either declaring herſelf a rival, or for oppoſing meaſures, which would much rather work for her than againſt her; the ſelf-tendered hand, however replete with fortune's gifts, was never yet accepted by a man of ſpirit and delicacy, both of which every one muſt allow the Lieutenant

Lieutenant to be; and ſhe ſhould, at leaſt, be ſo far ſuperior to her elder ſiſter, in that gentleman's good opinion, that ſhe would give him *leave* to aſk her the queſtion, inſtead of ſtooping to *ſolicit* his acceptance of her; and the Lieutenant was too critical a judge of light and ſhade of character, and too juſt in his deciſions to deny her her due; from all which conſiderations ſhe ſettled it to content herſelf for the preſent, with this negative recommendation to his favor; not failing, nevertheleſs, to improve every opportunity to catch, to ſeize, to fix his tender friendſhip.

A MANOEUVRE.

Mrs. Cluwyd was provoked to find the young people did not ſo readily fall into her ſnare as ſhe had imagined; for ſhe had concluded, that by promoting their interviews, and making Ella believe her father was wholly averſe to the match, that a double advantage would have accrued, ſpurring her on, by the common oppoſition of common minds, into an act of diſobedience, and then playing off that act as a forcible argument with her huſband, for never ſeeing her more, conſequently making him anſwerable,

anſwerable, in the world's eye, for all the cruel treatment ſhe was reſolved they ſhould ſuſtain at her hands; on failing, therefore, in her attempts, ſhe became quite impatient to have the young lady ſent off from her elbow.

"She thought," ſhe told her huſband, "to have poſſeſſed a whole heart, and ſhe would not live to ſee herſelf neglected, as ſhe hourly was, by the man that had vowed her everlaſting attachment, and, after his example, by every one that viſited at the hall, for his daughter, who, upon ſolemn promiſe, was to have been no impediment whatever to their happineſs; beſides, as ſhe could not be anſwerable, ſhe ſaid, for the conduct of one that was grown up into womanhood before ſhe had any power over her, ſhe conceived it would be the wiſeſt and the ſafeſt ſcheme to place her with his old maiden relations, who would be enlivened by the company of their young couſin, at the ſame time that they proved, from their natural diſpoſition, a pair of *admirable duennas*.

Mr. Cluwyd was too much in love with his fair tyrant to diſpute her will and pleaſure, eſpecially when it was communicated under the maſk of family care and family caution; he therefore applied to the ladies, who joyfully conſented to receive Ella for their viſitant, for private reaſons, not the

ſmalleſt

ſmalleſt of which was the magnet, they were well aware, ſhe would prove to the Lieutenant, and provided he could be drawn into frequent interviews, Miſs Cluwyd flattered herſelf ſhe ſhould be able to turn them to good account.

They however objected to Hannah's company, ſhe was a pert, buſy huffy, and would throw their houſe into confuſion; it was therefore ſettled that ſhe ſhould have leave to go and ſee her friends, who lived at ſome diſtance, for the three preceding months to the trial, by which time they ſhould all know how to ſettle themſelves, and this to paſs as an indulgence both with miſtreſs and maid, to keep every one in good humor.

Hannah thought herſelf infinitely obliged, and as it was only a temporary ſeparation, went off in high ſpirits; and Ella, ſuppoſing her ſtay with the ladies would be but for a ſhort period, was conveyed to the village without much reluctance; under the eye of her mother-in-law, her interviews with the Lieutenant were not without their alloy, and ſhe thought ſhe knew the worſt that could befall her in her change of ſituation, the ſeeing him ſeldomer, but perhaps with more ſatisfaction; for ſhe would not, ſhe *promiſed* herſelf, be brow-beaten by them, into the ſacrifice of her own inclination, in many particulars, ſuch as walking, reading, and receiving what viſits ſhe pleaſed.

The

The poor Lieutenant found twenty important reaſons for calling frequently at the Miſs Cluwyd's, as ſoon as he underſtood that Ella had taken up her reſidence there, as meſſages from the hall, and to be meſſage-carrier, the meaneſt offices being honorable for thoſe we love; but ſad to tell, it was almoſt as frequently contrived, by theſe ingenious ſiſtèrs, from various excuſes, for the young lady to be inviſible; thus the ſunſhine of his happineſs was totally obſcured; add to which, upon all theſe occaſions, he was plunged into perſecutions, as the converſations he was compelled to bear a part in, with the maiden ladies, might juſtly be ſtiled, which, though ſcarcely poſſible to be borne, he durſt not complain of; whilſt the ladies put forth all their wiſdom, all their knowledge, and all their accompliſhments, to, as they fancied, entertain him.

Near three months paſſed away in this torturing ſtate of things, where the Lieutenant was concerned, and Mrs. Cluwyd had every reaſon to be ſatisfied with her ſucceſs, for ſo adroitly did ſhe exert herſelf, that her huſband became more infatuated every hour, and his wife, of courſe, more and more deſpotic; in a word, he ſeemed to have neither eyes, ears, nor underſtanding, but as ſhe dictated, or authorized, and over his fortune ſhe obtained abſolute dominion, though ſhe affected

affected to conſult him in the diſpoſal of it, in conſequence of which, the ſums that Mr. Cluwyd would have appropriated to his daughter's uſe, lay wholly at her mercy, and from reduction in the firſt inſtance, and remiſſneſs in the ſecond, were, at length, totally ſuſpended, and every trace of paternal remembrance appeared worn out in his heart.

The ladies were ſo *good-natured* as to make Ella truly ſenſible of the change; "your father, child," ſaid they, "has certainly taken leave of his ſenſes, to caſt off ſuch a girl as you, and at ſuch a time."

"I proteſt," ſaid Miſs Bell, "if you was not a child of ten thouſand, it would be enough to put wild notions in your head; critical as we well know the temperature of your heart to be at this unfortunate conjuncture."

"I do not underſtand you, Madam," ſaid Ella; "to have out-lived my father's kind conſideration of me, is an evil I muſt have felt, however otherwiſe happily ſituated."

"But ſtill," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "I inſiſt upon it, he would have been more excuſable if you was out of the reach of a temptation, of all others the moſt baneful to youth and inexperience, throwing yourſelf, my dear, into the arms of a young fellow, that ſo far from

from having it in his power to provide for you, is nearly deſtitute of proviſion himſelf."

Ella was very angry with herſelf, but ſo it moſt unluckily happened, that ſhe burſt into tears, and theſe benevolent gentlewomen were pleaſed to ſee them flow, hoping to make advantage of the diſtreſs they had occaſioned.

"Theſe, Miſs Ella," ſaid Miſs Bell, "are very alarming tokens, I could not have expected ſuch a thing, but the ſoftened heart is ſoon pained; mine was a gentle touch; I however pity you; nay I pity Mr. Overbury, for he ſees your tender attachment to him, and from notions of humanity, and humanity alone, Miſs Ella, neglects an opportunity that does not often await a young man whoſe ſword is all his fortune, for if you, fond girl, did not ſtand in the way, he could marry a woman with thouſands."

"*Fond* girl! Madam," ſaid Ella; "how have I deſerved that diſgraceful appellation?"

"Well, to prove it miſplaced, then," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "let us ſee what you will do for your deliverer, for I muſt tell you, Miſs Ella, however it may hurt your ſcrupulous nicety, Captain Overbury is entitled to much better wiſhes from you than

than ſeeing him involved in all the calamities of downright penury, when you can make him ſuch noble compenſation."

"And does Captain Overbury," ſaid Miſs Ella.—

"What would the child ſay," cried Miſs Bell; "does he complain of your folly and ingratitude? No, Miſs, he is too much a man of honor to expoſe, much leſs to cenſure your weakneſs; and yet it is, at beſt, only falſe honor, that reſtrains us from pointing the finger at an enemy; and ſince it is plain you are the cauſe of his wounding his intereſt, you, Couſin Ella, are his worſt of enemies; for his idea, I am well ſatisfied is, that if he was to marry, you would, ſimpleton-like, break your heart; now where are we to draw the line, muſt we charge the ſin of vanity upon your favorite, or will you conſent the whole fault ſhall lie at your door?"

Ella had ariſen, and ſeated herſelf two or three times, without a conſciouſneſs of ſo doing, during this harangue.

"If," ſaid ſhe, "Madam, Mr. Overbury's advancement depends upon me, it ſhall be inſtantly, it ſhall be warmly promoted; we are not, as you imagine, upon any footing but that of friends; no love declaration has he ever yet made me, no fond confeſſion have I yet been guilty of; unhappy girl

girl that I am; he has only ſerved me moſt eſſentially, and I have *looked* too thankfully; that is my only crime."

"Pardon me, my good girl," ſaid Miſs Chriſtiana, "if I affirm that your crime, as you are pleaſed to call it, is of an earlier date than your obligations to Mr Overbury; you forget, my dear little girl, that we found you out, before this valorous knight had performed his feats of chivalry, and dignified your attachment to him with that air of tender gratitude, ſuitable to a diſtreſſed, and unexpectedly delivered damſel; nay, do not get into a fit of the pouts, Ella, becauſe I venture to treat, a ſerious affair, I grant you, ſomewhat ludicrouſly; but be more than woman, hear me patiently, and you ſhall make glorious atonement for your error."

"Ah," ſaid Miſs Bell, "do my dear Ella, ſhew him that your heart is not made of the penetrable ſtuff he imagines; ſhew him, in ſhort, by ſhunning him, that you can exiſt without him."

"I ſubmit myſelf to your guidance, ladies," ſaid the bluſhing and deeply-ſighing Ella, "you have given me a double motive to exert myſelf, the promotion of Mr. Overbury's fortune, and proving to you that I am not the *fond* girl you take me for; as, forgive me, ladies, I muſt believe you have made yourſelves miſtreſſes of his ſentiments, by ſome ſuch method as you have diſcovered mine,

mine, and have a rule of conduct upon this occaſion, with which it is not intended I ſhould be made acquainted."

The artful ſiſters caught at, and were determined to improve this hint; they therefore denied the intimation in that particular manner which always confirms a ſuſpicion; and Ella was fixed either to conquer her tenderneſs for a man who had betrayed and abandoned her, or to die a martyr to her feelings in ſilence.

Mr. Overbury, who had bound himſelf to quit the country from the moſt generous of motives, and had ſettled the whole plan of reconciling his mind to the loſs of her he loved, this liberal friend, this heroic Mr. Overbury, was ready to expire with grief, when he perceived the change in Miſs Ella Cluwyd's behaviour.

Inſtead of the ſweet ſmile, with which ſhe was accuſtomed to addreſs him, ſhe ſhrunk at his approach, and took the very firſt opportunity to withdraw, without her eyes once bidding him adieu, or honoring him with one intimation of impoſed conſtraint, or ill-ſupported reluctance, nor was there a ſingle trait, in her whole countenance, to ſpeak peace to the fears, which he entertained of her total reprobation of him.

Having fallen one morning into a profound reverie, on Ella's viſible impatience to retire, upon his unexpectedly entering, as if

deſirous more pointedly to mark her altered ſentiments, he was addreſſed, to his extreme aſtoniſhment, by Miſs Bell Cluwyd, the only lady then in the room, in the following manner:

"I beg your pardon, Sir," ſaid this *mirror of diſcretion*, "for reminding you, you are not alone; who ſo well-bred, in general, as Captain Overbury, yet that he has his excentricities is plain, by his preſent abſence of mind; I could, however, give him right good advice, how to act for his own, and a certain young lady's happineſs."

"Then, Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, "you would be my better angel; teach me, O teach me, Miſs Cluwyd (for I find all diſguiſe is vain) to hate, to deſpiſe myſelf. Whilſt I had the preſumption to believe I ſaw a diſtinction, in my favor, that was dearer to me than my own exiſtence, in the heart of your amiable relation, I thought I could have removed to a diſtance from this ſpot, and ſacrificed every hope for her benefit; yet am I cut to the ſoul by her coldneſs, her proper treatment of a coxcomb of your creation, Madam; I approached her as a higher order of beings, and dared only to behold her with the awe ſhe inſpired, until you and Miſs Chriſtiana, cruelly, and I am now convinced miſtakenly, aſſured me I was beloved by her."

"You

"You need not make a point of being ſo very ſevere upon yourſelf, in this inſtance," ſaid the encouraging Miſs Bell, "for if any man could be juſtified in ſuppoſing himſelf irreſiſtible, it would be Mr. Overbury; nor would that gentleman find many ladies unpropitious, if he was even to look beyond a ſilly girl, that was attached very naturally, from its being the firſt agreeable fellow ſhe had an opportunity of making an acquaintance with; Captain Overbury might obtain women with thouſands."

"You are diſpoſed to rally, Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant.

"No, upon my honor, replied the lady, I ſpeak a ſerious truth; nay, Mr. Overbury, added ſhe, affecting to bluſh and look confuſed, ſince we are got ſuch lengths upon the ſubject, I will be more than ſerious, I will be imprudent; ridiculous, you may perhaps call it.—"

The Lieutenant ſtared.

—"But the fact is, that the woman now before you, with fifteen thouſand pounds, and the expectance, the dependence, I may call it, of fifteen more at my ſiſter's death, (for it is certain ſhe will never marry) would not be diſinclined, from motives of benevolent concern for a worthy young gentleman's happineſs, and from a generous deſire to ſave a not abſolutely unamiable girl from deſtruction, to ſhare her life and fortune

with—can I, ought I, to utter it—with Mr. Overbury."

The Lieutenant was amazed, and might now have ſat for the ſtatue of deſpair, and now for the ſtatue of ſurprize! ſuch alternate changes did this ſpeech produce in his countenance; whilſt the lady, with downcaſt eyes, and the prettieſt youthful flutter imaginable, was evidently waiting his reply.

"How, Madam," ſaid he, at length, "how am I to reconcile theſe contradictions? you think me unworthy of Miſs Ella Cluwyd, uncertain as her proviſion is unfortunately become by her father's change of condition, yet would honor me with your hand, enriched as it is with the bounty of heaven; but ſacred be your fortune from the poſſeſſion of a man that has not a heart to offer you."

"Our ſituations," ſaid the lady' "are ſo extraordinary, that we ſeem to have changed characters; but, oppreſſed as I am with a ſenſe of the *ſeeming* impropriety of my conduct, for it is cuſtom, Sir, not reaſon which has made it a crime for a woman to be ſincere, I will have the courage to explain myſelf; unworthy of my couſin I never thought you; what I ought to bluſh for having now declared to you, proves I only thought you *unfit* for each other, from your ſlender finances; your birth, education, profeſſion,

feſſion, and natural endowments, would all contribute to ſanctify the ſtep I have brought myſelf to propoſe to you, whilſt my fortune ſupplied the only deficiency you can be charged with; but all your advantages, without the means of ſubſiſtence, would only, I am convinced, young gentleman, in a marriage with Ella, render you both more wretched."

Mr. Overbury ſpoke not, and the lady proceeded:

"Had you, indeed, belonged to the navy, your proweſs might have cut out a way for you to wealth; but military rewards are chiefly of the honorary kind, mere feathers in the hats of its moſt gallant votaries; and as Falſtaff aſks, from the pen of the immortal bard, *will honor ſet a limb?* ſo I, Mr. Overbury aſk you, will honor ſupport a family? your heart ſuggeſts an honeſt negative, I read it in your countenance; what I ought, or would further ſay, I ſcarce know, but as your prepoſſeſſion in favor of Ella Cluwyd is both pitied and excuſed by me, you would owe me no apology, if an involuntary ſigh was ſometimes to eſcape you, until time and my attentions made you forget the cauſe, when the effect would ceaſe of courſe."

The Lieutenant got up, "I retire," ſaid he, "I reſpectfully retire, from a ſcene, I am unable to ſupport; I muſt, I find,

baniſh myſelf from your too engaging family, in order to recover my own eſteem, for I will be honeſt and poor; farewell then, Madam; a week or two more, and the tie that holds me in this country will be looſened, and during thoſe weeks I muſt wean myſelf from my ſoft, my painful ſenſations, and will therefore never truſt myſelf to ſee you more;" then bowing he haſtily retired.

There was an ambiguous tenderneſs in his expreſſions, which was ill calculated to produce the intended conſequence, of a final and unfavorable explanation, and inſtead of being offended, the lady was more than ever charmed with him; could have fancied him, in the extravagance of her admiration, a deity in diſguiſe, ſent down to captivate and to delight this lower world; and had ſhe been miſtreſs of that world, would moſt aſſuredly have laid it at his feet.

A BOLD STROKE.

Miſs Bell Cluwyd having tortured her recollection to find a proper perſon to propoſe for a huſband for Ella, at laſt fixed upon a young Baronet in an adjoining county, who, though half a fool, was wiſe enough to cloſe with

with the propoſal, having ſeen Ella ſeveral times *en paſſant*, as it was accompanied with a poſitive promiſe of inheriting the fortune of both the ladies at their deceaſe; and thus far did Miſs Bell venture to go, without either the knowledge or concurrence of her ſiſter, who, therefore, received her report with ſome marks of offended dignity; but, as the diſpoſal of Ella was a common cauſe, and ſhe was unable to ſuggeſt a better method, Miſs Chriſtiana had the addreſs to approve, after ſome little apologetical arguments, of the meaſures Miſs Bell had purſued, and to conceal her private reſolution of counter-working her at all points, whenever the Lieutenant became the immediate object.

The poor Lieutenant, thus cut off from even beholding the face of his beloved Ella, an indulgence which, cruel as ſhe was, was ſtill dear to him, fell into the deepeſt dejection; he walked through every ſolitary path he could meet with, and ſtudiouſly avoided thoſe that led to the hall, nor was there a tender lamentation that did not eſcape him.

In one of theſe moments of heart-felt diſtreſs, and heart-felt agitation, having made a wrong turning, which brought him in view of the village, he was ſuddenly called to by Mr. and Mrs. Cluwyd, who were taking an airing in a low phaeton, with little idea

of breaking in upon the ſolitude of this deſpairing enamorato.

"What do I behold," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, "the ghoſt of my departed friend! Why, man, you will not be capable of attending us, upon our grand buſineſs, if ſomething is not done for you; prithee, then, paſs the preceding time to the aſſizes with us."

"Ah, do," ſaid the lady, "go home with us, and perhaps we may find a *cure* for your growing diſorder, looking archly at him; this dying hero, Sir," ſaid ſhe, to Mr. Cluwyd, "ought to be the object of our tendereſt care."

"Right," replied the huſband, "and that he may not diſappoint our friendly wiſhes, I will reſign my ſeat to him," (jumping out of the carriage) "come, Sir, let me ſee how you will charioteer the lady."

The Lieutenant made fifty excuſes; he had particular engagements at the ferry-houſe, he had military duty to perform, he had letters to diſpatch.

"Not an article of which," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, "but may be tranſacted with the ſame convenience at the hall as in your own lodgings; and, therefore, my boy, in return for your having preſerved me, I will make one bold puſh to be ſerviceable to you; ſo take your place by the lady."

The

The Lieutenant was compelled to aſcend the carriage, and Mr. Cluwyd, chatting by the ſide of his priſoner, as he called him, eſcorted them to the hall.

Mrs. Cluwyd, by nods and winks, at every opportunity, ſeemed to wiſh the Lieutenant to underſtand, ſhe was ſenſible of the nature of his indiſpoſition, and often by ſmiles, would appear to inſinuate, ſhe was entirely in his intereſt.

Her idea, as we have already mentioned, was, upon getting Miſs Ella ſent to the maiden ladies, that in the true ſpirit of girliſh oppoſition and reſentment, on finding herſelf watched and conſtrained (as ſhe was certain would be the caſe, under their roof) ſhe would have turned her thoughts to eloping with the Lieutenant, who, ſhe doubted not, would pay her ſufficient attention, to inform himſelf of all that paſſed, and was ſufficiently in love with her to be forward to avail himſelf of her romantic inclination.

To promote this deſired event the more effectually, ſhe had contrived to make the father neglect her, with every additional mortification, in her power to throw into the ſcale; having, beſides the getting rid of the girl, and depriving the Lieutenant of the favor and friendſhip of Mr. Cluwyd, the further inducement of promiſed ſatisfaction to herſelf in the diſhonor it would be to the ſage and infallible ladies, the *Miſs* Cluwyds,

to have their young couſin ſlip through their fingers, and the abundant credit it would give her with her huſband, that no ſuch ſtep had been even attempted under *her* conduct, notwithſtanding ſhe was ſo inſolently looked down upon by theſe proud relations.

Aware, however, at length, of her error in politics, from the fooliſh delicacy of Ella, and the formal principles of the Lieutenant, ſhe was become anxious to ſtart upon new ground, and it appeared to her, under this predicament, to be a great point gained, to have got the love-lorn ſpark ready at her elbow, to be played as occaſion might require or authorize.

In this ſtate of things, the third day after Mr. Overbury's arrival at the hall, about half an hour before dinner, a phaeton and four elegant bays, followed by three ſervants, in ſuitable liveries, drove up the avenue.

" Who have we here, ſaid Mr. Cluwyd; " a ſmart fellow, upon my honor," ſaid the lady; " with the retinue, as well as the appearance of a man of faſhion."

Sir Walter Stephens was announced, with a requeſt that Mr. Cluwyd would favor him with five minutes private audience.

They retired together into the ſaloon, where the young Baronet, with what he believed a good grace, ſolicited Mr. Cluwyd's permiſſion to pay his addreſſes to his daughter,

ter, adding, that he had the ſanction of the Miſs Cluwyd's approbation, and knowledge of his, perhaps, ſeemingly abrupt viſit.

Mr. Cluwyd, who knew Sir Walter's fortune and family, had no objection, "my daughter's heart," ſaid he, "muſt be her own gift; win that, Sir, and I will with pleaſure beſtow her hand upon you. Will you dine with me?"

The Baronet was aware of the *etiquette* on a firſt viſit, he, therefore, heſitated for a reply, but, upon Mr. Cluwyd's repeating his invitation, he had not the courage to ſay no; and was introduced to Mrs. Cluwyd and the Lieutenant, as a friend of the family.

The converſation was general until the cloth was removed, and the ſervants withdrawn; when Mr. Cluwyd, filling a bumper for himſelf, and calling upon the company to follow his example, ſaid, "Come, Sir, we will drink ſucceſs to your tender wiſhes; for you muſt know," continued he, when the toaſt had gone round, "that this gentleman, Sir Walter Stephens, has honored me with his company this day, upon a buſineſs he can have no diſlike to my communicating to the preſent circle, to offer himſelf a candidate for my Ella's affections."

Mrs. Cluwyd's face was in a flame, and the poor Lieutenant was ſinking into the

earth

earth with horror and diſmay, when Mr. Cluwyd, without perceiving the diſorder he had occaſioned, turned to the Baronet and ſaid, " Mr. Overbury, Sir, is my deliverer from the hands of the ruffians, who would have murdered me and my whole family; you will judge, therefore, how high he ſtands in my eſteem and gratitude."

The Baronet was acquainted with the particulars of the affair, and only bowed to the Lieutenant.

But however comfortleſs or trying Mr. Overbury found his ſituation, under the eye of a declared rival, Mrs. Cluwyd was, if poſſibly, ſtill more diſcompoſed at the conqueſt Miſs Ella had made.

The chit ſhe had chaſed from her houſe, to prevent her annoying her, to become a lady, take place of her wherever they met, and carry off the richeſt man in the county; forbid it malice, envy, revenge, every dire paſſion!

She, however, flattered herſelf ſhe ſhould be able, without appearing in it, to throw an impediment in the way, if ſhe could but once reconcile the Lieutenant and Ella Cluwyd in ſocial intercourſe, particularly under the touching and alarming proſpect of an eternal ſeparation; a work ſhe determined to effect; and having ſtruck out this reſt for her hopes, ſhe became very lively and even witty

witty with the Baronet, who was fond, it ſoon appeared, of what he conceived to be *ſmart repartee*, but in reality was neither more nor leſs than downright punning.

Flaſh for flaſh paſſed rapidly between them; and the Lieutenant, miſtaking this behaviour for a full proof of her approbation of his propoſals, plied the bottle, firſt as a cordial, and next as an opiate, to the equal amazement and amuſement of Mr. Cluwyd, who never ſaw him intoxicated before, and who abundantly enjoyed his abrupt departure to his chamber, on finding he could ſit it no longer.

" Ella Cluwyd, ſaid the Lieutenant, faſtening the door of his apartment, to ſecure himſelf from interruption, " beſt beloved of my heart, my ſweet, my amiable Ella Cluwyd, you have undone me. Why did I not fall in your defence, for great would have been the glory, the felicity of ſuch a deſtiny; but to live to ſee you— I cannot ſpeak it; Ella Cluwyd, Ella Cluwyd, you have undone me.

Thus did he continue to lament until nature being quite exhauſted he fell aſleep; for though his head was ſtupid, his heart was a long time before it beat itſelf to repoſe.

The Baronet did not take his leave till late in the evening.

Mrs. Cluwyd, the moment Sir Walter was gone, gave her opinion of his propoſal, "How can you afford," ſaid ſhe, "to accept his offer of marrying your daughter? Can you flatter yourſelf, though the article of fortune has not yet been mentioned, that ſuch an event would not hang inſupportable weights upon your purſe? Sir Walter will moſt aſſuredly expect you to do many things, that are not only inconvenient, but incompatible with your duty, on your preſent proſpect of a young family, by the woman you have ſo generouſly taken without a ſhilling. Moreover, my love," ſaid ſhe, (aſſuming all her winning graces) "I am poſſeſſed of a ſecret, which nothing but your daughter's happineſs and your honor, ſhould have drawn from me, your Ella's affections, Sir, are already engaged to a man, who wants nothing but an eſtate, to be the man, of all others, you would chooſe for a ſon-in-law.

"What, my boy, Overbury," cried Mr. Cluwyd, "but how ſhall we provide for them? He deſerves to be happy, if I have the power of making him ſo; and I would ſtrain a thouſand points in his favor."

"Well then," replied Mrs. Cluwyd, "ſubmit yourſelf to my guidance and we ſhall all be happy; I will in the firſt place, with your good leave, (a very ſoft mode of proclaiming her ſovereign will and pleaſure) bring

bring Miſs Ella home; it is her the poor Lieutenant is dying for; what we behold as diſeaſe, is only the ſevere conflict between his honor and his love; and do you propoſe the Baronet, at a future period, to your daughter, affecting much anger at her refuſal of him, as refuſe him ſhe will; then will I contrive for you to ſurprize the lovers together tête-a-tête, when giving your daughter a bank-note, juſt to enable her to make a Captain of her huſband, bid her follow her own inclinations, only removing herſelf inſtantly from the hall, and never ſeeing you more."

" Nay, hear me out, Sir," ſaid the lady, (perceiving her huſband was eager to ſpeak) and then, if you can make objection;" Mr. Cluwyd was ſilent, and his wife proceeded:

" Thus embaraſſing them for a little time," ſaid ſhe, " you would teach them œconomy; and, upon their good behaviour, might, whenever you pleaſed, give me the conſequence with them, of being a ſucceſsful mediator; and on receiving them back to your arms, you could, you know, as a healer of all grievances, purchaſe your ſon-in-law a majority, and do a father's part by your daughter, according as your abilities may enable you at your death; and then, and then, my dear *Clue*," (a name of peculiar endearment, ſhe ſometimes beſtowed upon

upon him) "all my cares would be at an end, for ſo much do I love you, that I cannot bear a rival before my eyes, for ever and ever, though in the perſon of your own child."

"I proteſt," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, "I approve your plan from beginning to concluſion; why ſhould I wiſh my daughter to riſe beyond the degree of happineſs on the human barometer? be it then, in every reſpect, as you adviſe; and, that I may not be dragged into a quarrel with my female relations, let the work be all your own."

Mrs. Cluwyd ſent immediately for Hannah to come home; for ſhe knew it would mortify the *old cats*, as ſhe politely called her huſband's couſins, to have her reſtored to the family; and to fill up the meaſure of her good will towards them, ſhe reſolved the Lieutenant ſhould accompany her, without being informed of the buſineſs, in her viſit to demand her daughter-in-law at their hands.

Mr. Overbury was ſummoned to breakfaſt, before his eyes were open, and having done his utmoſt to conceal his diſtreſſed ſtate of mind and want of appetite; "Come," ſaid Mrs. Cluwyd, thou peeviſh pining lover, lead me to my carriage; I will do you the favor of treating you with a pleaſant airing."

The

The coachman had his private orders, and away they drove.

"Why will you young people," ſaid Mrs. Cluwyd, "perſiſt in your nonſenſical delicacy? you love one another; and who is not prepared for the conſequence of youthful attachment? for heavens' ſake, Overbury, be yourſelf then, and do not let the beautiful Ella be carried off by ſome more impudent, but far leſs deſerving fellow; it is, take my word for it, only aſk and have."

"What, Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, "would you have me be ſo baſe, as to ſeek to unite the woman I revere to the wreck of my fortune?"

"Pho, pho," returned the lady, "I ſhall ſee you arrive at a truncheon yet; for I doubt not of your courage as a ſoldier, though you make ſo miſerable a figure in the character of a lover; a little generalſhip, in both caſes, ought, and muſt be practiſed; it would not be very becoming, I grant you, for a prudent father to make choice of you for a ſon-in-law, and render himſelf, thereby, anſwerable for all the miſhaps of ſuch an union; but for love to prompt two young perſons to deviate from the ſtrict line of ſober documents, and forget that this is not the age for living in the camelion ſtile, would be juſtified by the reaſonable part of the world, and would ſoon be pardoned by any father, and eſpecially by the father of

Ella

Ella Cluwyd, who owes you his life, his all."

"There, there is the fetter that binds me," ſaid the Lieutenant.

"A fiddleſtick," ſaid the lady, "you loved each other from your firſt acquaintance, and this was no more than a lucky incident to forward the completion of your wiſhes."

The Lieutenant found much good ſenſe in her opinion and obſervations, but he only ſighed and was ſilent; when the coach, to his unſpeakable ſurprize, by a ſhort turning, drove up to the Miſs Cluwyd's door.

"I know," ſaid Mrs. Cluwyd, laughing, "it will make the *old cats* quite happy, for you to aſſiſt in bearing off their fair ward; ſo tell the ladies, John, your maſter has ſent me to fetch Miſs Ella home."

"Fetch her home," ſaid Miſs Bell Cluwyd, "I will not believe it; nor ſhall ſhe go with this imperious woman, for don't I ſee a young rake of an officer with her in the coach?"

"A rake!" ſaid the footman, (one of the domeſtics whoſe life had been preſerved by the Lieutenant) "I never heard Captain Overbury was a rake before, Madam."

"Overbury!" returned Miſs Bell, "is it he? well, tell the woman, your miſtreſs, I received Miſs Ella from her father's hands, and

and into her father's hands, alone, will I deliver her."

"John," ſaid Mrs. Cluwyd, ready to expire with rage, "fly home and inform your maſter how I am treated; no, ſtop," cried ſhe, "I will tell him myſelf, and I fancy he will not thank the authors of my diſgrace; refuſe to be truſted with my huſband's child! Bear witneſs, Captain Overbury, how mildly and politely I have conducted myſelf until this moment, when temper is no longer a virtue; drive home, I ſay."

Mrs. Cluwyd was all wrath and bitter reſentment the whole way; ſhe would puniſh them, ſeverely puniſh them; and "Overbury, nothing would do it more effectually, than beholding Ella your wife; marry her then, my good fellow, and depend upon me to reconcile Mr. Cluwyd to your conduct."

"I would not truſt myſelf to hear you talk thus," ſaid the Lieutenant, "but that the event you mention, does not reſt upon my power; your advice, Madam, I will confeſs to you, is ſeducing; and your protection would ſanctify the ſtep; but ſo far from having the proſpect of being united to Miſs Ella, ſhe will not permit me to approach her."

"She would be a lady, I warrant you," cried the furious Mrs. Cluwyd, (the Lieutenant, for the firſt time felt the ſhock of

this

this idea) "but I will periſh firſt," added ſhe, in an agony of diſpleaſure. "Here is Mr. Cluwyd."

Mr. Cluwyd had ſeen the carriage drive on at a violent rate, and conceived he knew not what of fearful alarm; and haſtening down the avenue, aſked the ſervant, as he opened the gate, if every thing was ſafe, and every body well; but before he could receive an anſwer, his lady ſcreamed, "Come with me, Mr. Cluwyd, come this inſtant back with me, to thoſe audacious women, your relations; and either give me a convincing proof of your affection, or never ſee me more."

"What do you mean, my dear?" ſaid the aſtoniſhed Mr. Cluwyd.

"Your daring relations, Sir, will not let me have your daughter; is my authority to be thus diſputed; my tenderneſs inſulted? Can you ſtand by, a tame ſpectator of my wrongs? Drive forward," ſaid ſhe, her huſband being ſeated in the coach, "no, back," cried ſhe, "it is to the old maid's houſe we are going; and now I ſhall ſee whoſe cauſe you will eſpouſe, mine or—"

"Compoſe yourſelf, my dear," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, "Ella *ſhall* return with us, but, in my opinion, the beſt way of reſenting the affront, will be, by ſilent contempt."

"And you will not, then, ſee me righted?" exclaimed the angry lady, "you are afraid of

of a couple of old women's tongues; what a creature have I beſtowed myſelf upon!" then ſtriking her forehead, "but come," cried ſhe, "I have it, ſend Mr. Overbury in, to declare your commands, and to lead your daughter off in triumph; this will be ſweet, will be glorious revenge; ſo grant me this, and I will pardon all the paſt."

"Moſt willingly," ſaid Mr. Cluwyd, "if Overbury has no objection to being made your cudgel."

She kiſſed her huſband's hand, "I am ſure of his conſent," ſaid ſhe, "for he will fight his own battles by fighting mine; they are his direſt enemies."

The coach once more ſtopped at Miſs Cluwyd's.

"Tell the women, John," ſaid Mrs. Cluwyd, "that your maſter is come in perſon, ſince they would have it ſo; and, Mr. Overbury do us the favor to alight, and bring the young lady to us."

"And is this," Sir," ſaid Miſs Bell Cluwyd, with bitterneſs, "a ſtorm of your raiſing; how have I been deceived, when I took you for a man of liberality and honor!"

"Madam," ſaid the Lieutenant, turning from Miſs Bell to Miſs Chriſtiana, "do me the juſtice to believe that accident alone has thrown me into my preſent ſituation; I never yet was guilty of a ſtudied diſreſpect to a lady

a lady, or abuſed her good opinion of me; and yours is the laſt family I ſhould think of beginning the unworthy practice with; I bear you even gratitude, Madam, as the common friend of two young people, heaven has not deſtined for each other;" ſo ſaying, the bluſhing Ella having given him her hand, and hurrying to the door, he bowed low to Miſs Chriſtiana, a polite, a ſpeaking bow, ſhe called it, and followed the young lady into the carriage. And this diſtinction, this diſcrimination of Miſs Chriſtiana from her ſiſter, this compliment to her underſtanding, this ſhe knew not what to phraſe it, flattering peculiarity, was never forgot by her to the end of her exiſtence.

Mrs. Cluwyd was in high good humor all the way to the hall; extolled the Lieutenant's behaviour to the ſkies, congratulated herſelf upon her victory, and even condeſcended to ſmile graciouſly upon her huſband; bidding Miſs Ella be chearful, at every pauſe, for that now ſhe was delivered out of their hands, and ſhould be perfectly miſtreſs of herſelf; and thus ſhe continued the whole evening to keep up the ball, promiſing herſelf the next advance, now ſhe had attained the verge, would give her the accompliſhment of all her wiſhes.

MUCH BUSINESS.

Mrs. Cluwyd, as the event proved, was a tolerable politician; for the Lieutenant and Miſs Ella, after a ſhort converſation or two, though by little more than timid hints, (each apprehending a change in the ſentiments of the other) diſcovered the plots which had been formed by the Miſs Cluwyds, to alienate and ſeparate them, and were ſoon convinced (ſuch is the lover's logic) of the great miſtake they ſhould commit, if they imagined happineſs could originate, for them, from any other ſource than their *renewed*, or more properly, for the firſt time, *acknowledged*, attachment; and Mrs. Cluwyd, who could read their hearts in their countenances, was not long ignorant of their ſentiments.

The Baronet was ſpirited up by the rancorous Miſs Bell, to make a ſecond viſit to the hall, and offer to take Miſs Ella without a ſhilling; a piece of conduct that more than ever irritated the mother-in-law againſt him, from feeding the vanity of the girl, and controverting her poſitive affirmations to her huſband, of pulling his purſe-ſtrings; ſhe, however, had little difficulty to perſuade Mr. Cluwyd, whoſe heart was the Lieutenant's, to defer mentioning the matter

ter to his daughter, till after trial, the time of which now drew very near, under pretence of ſparing her mind, that would have ſuch warm exerciſe, ſhe ſaid, in a public court, and would ſtand in need of the utmoſt collection; but, in reality, to give herſelf the neceſſary pauſe, for regulating and digeſting her grand plan of family operation.

Hannah was in raptures to be reſtored to her young lady, and inveighed in the ſtrongeſt terms againſt the ill-natured old women, that had been trying, ſhe found, to have her finally diſcharged; and would not conſent, ſhe ſaid, to her entering their houſe, only becauſe ſhe once told them of the broken-hearted lovers that haunted their avenue; a truth that was known all over the county; ſhe was glad ſhe did not hear of their wickedneſs before her return; as ſhe ſhould have ſpent her time in weeping, inſtead of enjoying ſatisfaction, with her relations.

The morning appointed for the trial of the banditti being at length arrived, Hannah begged they would let her go in the ſame coach with the Captain; for why? She feared nothing where he was, and every thing where he was not preſent.

When ſat down at the court, the judges were already aſſembled, and though the villains ſo juſtly deſerved to die, Miſs Cluwyd could not ſuppreſs a wiſh to ſave them all, except

except the valet, whoſe complicated guilt, even in her opinion, called for a more ſtriking puniſhment than the halter.

When brought forward to give her evidence, her tender ſpirits were ſo agitated that ſhe fainted, and was ſcarcely articulate in her account of her danger and deliverance.

Poor Hannah, to the great entertainment of the court, when called upon, beſought the judge to get Captain Overbury to ſtand cloſe by her ſide. "I ſhall be a dead woman, and pleaſe your worſhipful lordſhip." ſaid ſhe, "unleſs Captain Overbury will have the goodneſs to uphold me."

Being indulged in this requeſt, ſhe ventured to look around her, when ſeeing the priſoners, "Aye, mercy upon me," ſaid ſhe, "there ſtand the rogues that would have murdered me, poor harmleſs young woman as I am; but with the bleſſing of heaven, and the good pleaſure of your reverend lordſhip," addreſſing the judge, "I hope to ſee them all hanged, and this without one dread of their ghoſts haunting me, let my neighbors ſay what they will."

The court ſuffered her to tell the ſtory her own way; and the deſcription of her fright, of the Captain's manly courage, and his care of her young lady, amounted to two-thirds of her teſtimony, which ſhe concluded with ſaying, "if they are hanged I

ſhall, I believe, forgive them; not that I ſhall ever be my own woman again; for, and pleaſe you, my Lord Judge, with all humbleneſs I ſpeak it, I ſhould take your very Lordſhip for a thief, and all thoſe worſhipful black gentlemen (curteſying to the counſel) for thieves, let me meet you or them where I might, when it was beginning to be duſk; and the more's the pity, that I ſhould live to ſpeak ſuch a thing; but to be murdered, by agreement, in cold blood, and not from a ſudden *idear* that one might turn evidence, was ſo mortal *un*human, there is no getting over it.

The fellows now knelt, as is cuſtomary, to ſue for mercy from the court; but the Judge told them there was no mercy for them, for that it was an outrage on the peace of ſociety to think of ſuch a thing.

The valet was dreſſed in deep mourning, and affected the air of a gentleman; but whether from accident or violence was never known, he was found dead in his dungeon the morning after his condemnation; it was ſaid, by the breaking of a blood-veſſel; when, by the united intereſt and petition of Captain Overbury and Mr. Cluwyd, who ſet forth that the valet had drawn the other four men into their crime, their ſentence was at length changed from death to tranſportation; and thus ended one of the moſt daring deſigns that was ever planned, for the

number

number of innocent perſons marked down for ſlaughter, was thirteen beſides the young lady, who was deſtined to ſurvive them for the worſt of purpoſes; and the hand of Providence is ſeldom more conſpicuous than in their deliverance.

Mr. Overbury, by the moſt preſſing invitation from Mrs. Cluwyd, continued for ſeveral days at the hall, upon one of which Mr. Cluwyd, at his wife's requeſt, propoſed the Baronet to his daughter, who, as her mother-in-law had foretold, declared her averſion to him, and beſought her father not to countenance his addreſſes.

In vain did he enlarge upon his birth, youth, fortune, ſtile of living, equipage, and polite connexions; the *altogether* was avowed to have no charms for her, which confirming Mrs. Cluwyd's report of her pre-engaged affections to the Lieutenant, her father with difficulty forbore declaring his approbation of her choice, but was obliged to conduct himſelf by the line his lady had drawn out for his conduct, in the promiſed ſacrifice of the lovers in a *tete-a-tete*, a word Mrs. Cluwyd was very fond of, was all that was wanting to ſettle the great buſineſs of diſpoſing of his amiable child for life.

It was not long before Mrs. Cluwyd contrived to keep her word, when her huſband, even ſhe confeſſed, acted his part to a mira-

cle, for he would hear neither apology nor explanation; but giving his daughter a five hundred pound bank note, (a ſum more conſiderable than Mrs. Cluwyd thought neceſſary) he bid her follow her inclinations, only leaving his houſe immediately, and retired; juſt in time, he told his wife, though ſeemingly very ſuddenly, to ſave his credit with her; for he was ſtrongly prompted, both by gratitude and natural affection, to have preſſed them, as his beloved children, to his heart.

All conſternation and confuſion, Ella could not recollect one ſheltering roof; when her mother-in-law coming in, with a face of the moſt friendly concern, to finiſh the, to her, diverting ſcene, gave her a letter to an aunt ſhe had about forty miles diſtance, who, ſhe aſſured the weeping girl, would receive her with the utmoſt kindneſs; at the ſame time preſenting her with her purſe with a few guineas in it, to defray the expences of her journey, and prevent her breaking in upon her father's bounty; proteſting ſhe would work hard to reſtore them to favor, but adviſing them, by all means, to marry immediately.

Hannah hung about her miſtreſs, begging permiſſion to accompany her; "I will ſerve you thankfully, my dear Madam," ſaid ſhe, "for the ſole happineſs of ſerving you; I have clothes for years to come, your own good

good gift; and as to wages I don't care a ruſh about it, for I ſhall break my heart if you will not let me live with you."

Mrs. Cluwyd with tears, which ſhe had at command, conjured them not to irritate her huſband, by delaying their departure; the truth was, ſhe had her apprehenſions that his mind might relent, and blight her wiſhes in the very moment of their accompliſhment; "ſet off directly," ſaid ſhe, "I will venture to ſend the coach with you to any moderate diſtance, or until you can, ſomehow or other, accommodate yourſelves."

"There is a cottage," ſaid Hannah, "ſince Mr. Cluwyd can be ſo hard-natured, as to turn out to the wide world his only child, and the Captain Overbury that ſaved him from being murdered; there is, my dear young lady, a cottage ſeven miles off, inhabited by honeſt people, to whom I am well known, there you may, if you pleaſe, ſtop and collect yourſelf; you will find clean, wholeſome and reſpectful entertainment; you cannot, under your preſent ſurprize, tell which way to turn yourſelf, do then conſent to repoſe for an hour or two."

This requeſt being univerſally approved, they went forth wanderers from their late paternal and hoſpitable manſion; and Ella refuſing to become a wife under her preſent predicament, wrote a letter to her father,

from the cottage, entreating him to receive her back to favor and protection; offering, though her eyes were ſtreaming with tears, and her hands trembling from ſorrow, to give up even Mr. Overbury, if that act was neceſſary for reconciling him to his child, and to regulate her future conduct, in every particular, by his pleaſure.

The meſſenger ſpeedily returned with a line from Mr. Cluwyd to the Lieutenant, informing him that he relied upon his tender treatment of his daughter, in the character of her huſband, for that things were now carried too far to ſtop on this ſide matrimony; bleſſing them both, though ſeeming ſomewhat reluctant, and hinting that their future good behaviour might do much for them; but that he had forbid their being mentioned before him, until they were become man and wife.

This was deciſive. Ella paſſed the night at the cottage, and the Lieutenant ſet off for his quarters, until the morning, when he returned with a licence, and to the infinite delight of Hannah, who aſſiſted, as ſhe called it, at the ceremony, they were privately married.

They took up their reſidence at the market town, where they hourly flattered themſelves with receiving agreeable accounts from the hall; but accident, at the end of a couple of months, throwing the Lieutenant

in Mrs. Cluwyd's way, ſhe not only ſhunned and overlooked him, but on his preſſing to ſpeak to her, and complaining of her behaviour, ſhe flatly and roundly denied, even to himſelf, the part ſhe had taken, in promoting their union.

This ſtroke of confidence and turpitude opened their eyes, at once, to every thing they had to expect at her hands; for it was plain, that inſtead of having them recalled, it was her fixed purpoſe never to ſuffer them to approach their father more; and it was as much as both their authority and their perſuaſions could do, to keep Hannah from curſing her in the bitterneſs of her wrath.

The Lieutenant now received a new rout, and was ſo far from conſidering it as a miſfortune, they felt it as a relief, and turned their thoughts ſolely to the improvement of their little exchequer, but were at a loſs how to diſpoſe of Hannah, as they could neither afford to keep her, nor prevail upon themſelves to bid her depart.

They had, however, at length, the pleaſure to diſcover, though much againſt her will, and contrary to her intentions, that ſhe had a ſweetheart, a good, honeſt, ſober fellow, who had all the proſpect of decently maintaining her, and who, from the danger of loſing her, (ſhe having publickly declared ſhe would travel the world over with her miſtreſs) was become moſt importunate to

obtain her hand, but all in vain, until deſpair put him upon the expedient of applying to the Lieutenant for his intereſt.

The Lieutenant and his wife undertook his cauſe; but no arguments had force with Hannah, until they acknowledged their inability to give her, even her board, in return for her ſervices; and beſought her as an obligation on themſelves, to let them have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing her ſettled before their departure.

The poor girl conſented with a very ill grace, for ſhe affirmed ſhe could never love twenty huſbands better than her dear Captain and Mrs. Overbury; and left them, even after ſhe became a wife, with the deepeſt ſorrow and regret.

The cruel Mrs. Cluwyd, hoped to hear (having carried all her points againſt them with her huſband) that they were as miſerable as diſappointed expectations, and narrow proviſion could make them; but, notwithſtanding they did experience many mortifying viciſſitudes, from their ſtraitened income, when illneſs and an increaſing family bore hard upon their revenue, their union, though begun under the diſagreeable auſpices of a change of fortune, was an union of affection, of tender ſolicitude for each other's happineſs, and of lively gratitude, which neither time, chance, or circumſtances, could deſtroy.

Mr.

Mr. Overbury would not comply with his wife's requeſt, to devote the five hundred pounds to his military advancement; but, anxious to leave her in the beſt poſſible ſtate he was able, in caſe the duties of his profeſſion ſhould cut ſhort his days, he laid it out in a tolerably advantageous annuity, for their joint lives; but it was with the utmoſt difficulty Mrs. Overbury got his name added, for he wiſhed her to receive the whole benefit of the purchaſe.

They had buried ſeveral children; the Lieutenant, nevertheleſs, imbittered every paternal delight his Ella's perfections afforded him, by the remembrance of his inability to ſhelter her from the brow-beatings of life; nor could he, for a moment, bear to contemplate her proſpects, if ſhe ſhould happen to be deprived of her mother and himſelf.

He had, indeed, for many years, relied upon the probability of Mr. Cluwyd's diſenchantment, and would enjoy, in imagination, the rapture, returning proſperity to his wife and child would give him, though he, himſelf, ſhould be deſtined only to behold it and die.

No wonder, then, that with apprehenſions ſo ſtrong, and feelings ſo tender, he ſhould eagerly embrace the firſt *family* offer for improving his Ella's fortune; to Miſs Bell Cluwyd, his heart told him, he would not

have truſted the education of his beloved child (though he had never revealed his reaſon for having ſo mean an opinion of her, even to his wife) but of Miſs Chriſtiana he thought very tolerably, and was too juſt in his ſentiments to condemn her, for having oppoſed his marriage with her couſin; and as he doubted not but the ornamental and the uſeful, would be equally attended to in the cultivation of his Ella's mind, ſo, conſequently, he perſuaded himſelf, her talents and her morals would be the alternate objects.

The Miſs Cluwyds were in a frenzy of reſentment when the Lieutenant's marriage tranſpired; and the eldeſt lady, as fame reported, unable to ſupport the ſeverity of the ſhock, contracted, or more properly encouraged a propenſity to drinking, which rendered her life contemptible, and her death unlamented; hourly execrating the day ſhe firſt ſaw the all-captivating Lieutenant, as well as the day that deprived her of him for ever.

Miſs Chriſtiana inherited her ſiſter's fortune; and, from a ſtrength of mind, rather unuſual with ladies under the influence of the *tender paſſion*, carried off her diſappointment to admiration, but the fact was, that Miſs Chriſtiana had ſoothings to which her ſiſter's heart was a total ſtranger.

Miſs Bell believed Ella Cluwyd the only impediment to her wiſhes, reſpecting the Lieutenant;

Lieutenant; but Miſs Chriſtiana well knew her own reſolutions, of powerful, of unerring oppoſition, had the Baronet's offer been accepted; inſomuch that ſhe looked upon her young couſin's union with Mr. Overbury, as a light evil, when compared with the wars and perſecutions ſhe muſt have engaged in, to obviate that killing, that diſtracting event, his marriage with her own ſiſter; for death itſelf, under ſuch circumſtances, could not have relieved her; whereas, ſhould Ella make her exit, there would be an inſtant opening for her, at leaſt in the chapter of poſſibilities, for ſucceeding her in the Lieutenant's affections; and that he bore her no ſmall reſpect, his parting bow, and parting look had told her.

She, therefore, thanked heaven, in her daily litany, that ſhe had eſcaped the double rock of Miſs Bell's deſtruction; namely, neither teaching the Lieutenant to cenſure her forwardneſs, or deſpiſing her weakneſs; and ſo whimſical was her turn of humor and fancy, that the parting bow, and parting look was for ever before her eyes, and ſeemed to promiſe her every romantic wiſh of her heart.

And every romantic wiſh of her heart, every latent chimera of her vanity, and every ideal proſpect of happineſs, were awakened in her breaſt, on the accidental rencounter of the little Ella upon the parade; and more

more particularly when ſhe underſtood that Mrs. Overbury's impaired health had brought them to Bath; the extreme delicacy of that lady's complexion, having always been ſet down by theſe wiſe ſiſters, as an indication of not only ſhort-lived bloom, but an early decay of conſtitution.

And thus for the Lieutenant's ſake, and the Lieutenant's ſake alone, though years had paſſed away ſince ſhe was acquainted with him, did the generous Miſs Chriſtiana make the overture for receiving his child as her own; and as ſhe could not forgive her couſin for being her ſucceſsful rival, and was reſolved never to be upon any footing with her; ſhe had deviſed the ſingular condition of holding her at a diſtance upon the penalty of retracting her high deſigns towards her daughter, a condition that ſhe could at any time wave in favor of the Lieutenant, whenever her couſin Ella ſlept with her fathers; and paternal tenderneſs having drawn him to her houſe, ſhe would not doubt but paternal ambition would fix him hers, and their little girl become their no leſs natural than common heir; ſhe, therefore, congratulated herſelf again and again, that her conduct had been ſuch, through every trying ſcene, that none could ſuſpect her of other motives, than ſuch as it would do her honor to acknowledge, a *family pride*, to enrich a near relation, and a family tenderneſs for the infant Ella. But to return to our heroine.

NEW

NEW SCENES.

Miſs Cluwyd, for ſhe ſtill ſuffered herſelf to be called Miſs, was a kind of princeſs in her own country.

The lady at the hall, having ſoon grown weary of the ſolitude into which her marriage had plunged her, beſides ſome certain motives reſpecting Sir Walter Stephens, who had bid adieu to that part of England, was evermore reſtleſs and diſſatisfied, until ſhe teized her huſband to conſent to exchange Cluwyd-park for a ſituation within the reach of London; upon which event, Miſs Chriſtiana became her relation's tenant, though declaredly againſt Mrs. Cluwyd's will; but no other offering, and the maſter of the manſion inſiſting he would never leave it unoccupied, they had been compelled to give into a propoſal that cut her to the heart, and twelve months notice was required by Miſs Chriſtiana, and agreed to on the part of Mr: Cluwyd, whenever the time ſhould arrive, that he wiſhed to re-poſſeſs his family reſidence.

The houſe, beſides its internal convenience and elegance, was delightful beyond deſcription, from its ſituation; art and nature had both lent their aid to render it all that could be wiſhed; beautiful gardens, fertile plains,

plains, romantic hills, a view of the Severn, with a park and demeſne that would not have diſgraced a royal poſſeſſor; and the *tender paſſion* having given a moſt peculiar turn to Miſs Chriſtiana's fancy, ſhe laid out large ſums in the moſt whimſical improvements, as ſhe conceived them, though in fact mere alterations, ſuch as grottos, temples, caverns, wilderneſſes, &c. &c. and, in order to heighten the pleaſure of poſſeſſing ſuch a ſpot, and to blot out, as much as poſſible, the memory of its lawful owner, ſhe gave it the name of Arcadia-houſe, and Arcadia-park; ſetting herſelf down as a rural queen, ſighing out her days of ſeparation from the moſt accompliſhed of men.

She had but two neighbors, with whom ſhe condeſcended to mix upon terms of equality and ſocial intercourſe, the Rector of the pariſh, a Mr. Wilmot, who was an agreeable companion, and an uſeful acquaintance, but rather incumbered with a wife and ſeven children, the eldeſt of which, a boy, now juſt eight years old, was a great favourite with this great woman, becauſe he preſented her with a ſprig of myrtle whenever ſhe came to the rectory, and when he ſpoke of her, in her abſence, called her the *ſenſible* lady; as for his wife, ſhe was a plain, good ſort of perſon, with her heart in her family, and her head unfurniſhed with well-bred whims,

and

and was therefore a non-entity in this, though ſmall, very brilliant circle.

The other acquaintance was the lord of the next manor, a Mr. Elliſon, an odd compound of pride and ſentiment, of the coxcomb and the wit; he had the talent, according to Miſs Cluwyd's idea, of complimenting elegantly, which, ſhe would very gravely tell you, was one of the niceſt points of polite breeding.

This gentleman had alſo a wife, a kind of wonder in the creation; for, though educated in the *ton*, and an heireſs, ſhe was ſilent and inoffenſive, and conceived, therefore, by her ſmart neighbor, to be an excellent foil for her ſuper-abundant graces; they had moreover, a ſon, a boy about nine years old, of a different caſt of character to his mother, for he promiſed not to ſleep through life, being already deemed ill-natured by all that knew him, from being already actively miſchievous; but he had the misfortune to be brought up with the knowledge of having a fine eſtate, and treated with every ſpecies of that cruel kindneſs, which an only child too frequently experiences.

To theſe families our little heroine was introduced, as a near relation of Miſs Cluwyd, and her future companion, introduced by the ſweet name of Elfrida, which was not only a genteel name, her couſin obſerved,

ſerved, but well adapted to the ſcenes in which ſhe was born to ſhine, the ſcenes of Arcadia.

Maſter Wilmot approached her as a divinity; his mind, as Miſs Cluwyd called it, was paſtoral, and fitted him in a peculiar manner for her viſitant, and the boy would often amuſe himſelf with entwining myrtles, jeſſamine, and whatever elſe was ſoft and delicate, in wreaths for her head, then allure her to the ſide of the canal that ſhe might behold the work of his hands, upon which occaſions Maſter Elliſon would, generally, contrive to ſteal behind her, ſnatch it off and throw it into the water, and enjoy their mutual diſtreſs, when the dimpling waves conveyed it beyond their reach.

The ſame maſters attended the three children, for Mr. Wilmot having the complaiſance to ſuperintend, in his parochial excurſions, an eſtate of Miſs Cluwyd's, ſhe inſiſted, in return, upon treating Edmund with his education; and Mr. Elliſon propoſed, in order to pleaſe the young pupils, that they ſhould receive their leſſons alternately at Arcadia and at the Grange, his houſe, at three miles diſtance, and greatly approved the addition of Wilmot to the little party, as he ſaid it would create an uſeful emulation in the boys, and be of real advantage to Miſs Elfrida, at leaſt in the article of dancing, by there being a trio.

Young

Young Elliſon felt his conſequence, and held himſelf intitled, as ſoon as they were capable of a minuet, to dance the firſt with Elfrida; whilſt Wilmot, with humility and often down-caſt eyes, would wait his turn; but Elfrida, either leſs patient, or more open in her temper, hurried through the compelled performance, preſented both her little hands to her favorite, when he had leave to offer himſelf, danced her very beſt to do him honor, and wiſhed Mr. Elliſon would ſend his ſon to ſome of the great London ſchools, that they might not be troubled with him.

But in the midſt of all her buſineſs and all her entertainment, Elfrida would give a ſigh of tender remembrance to her dear father and mother; and one afternoon which ſhe ſpent at the Rectory, when Elliſon was abſent on a viſit, Wilmot found her with her eyes full of tears, looking at the church-yard, of which the parlor-windows had a ſide view.

"Miſs Elfrida," ſaid he, "What is it I ſee!" "Huſh," returned the little girl "and I will tell you all."

"I was thinking, Edmund, how much happier I ſhould be in that church, dead and gone, than parted as I am from my dear father and mother, to live with this fine rich couſin, who has forbid my naming them; did you ever hear of ſuch a thing, Wilmot? I am not to

name

name thoſe moſt dear to me, when at the ſame time, rather than not ſee them again, I would for ever, ever leave Arcadia."

"Ah, Miſs Elfrida," ſaid Wilmot, "do not talk ſo; for what would become of me if you was gone; could I have any pleaſure in dancing, painting, muſic, or geography, if you did not partake of the leſſons?"

"But if you only knew what a good papa I had, till he ſent me to this Arcadia; and what a dear mamma I have loſt, you would ſo pity me; indeed and indeed you would forget yourſelf, and wiſh me once more to live with them."

"And not ſee you again, Miſs Elfrida; how can I wiſh that?"

"Call me Ella," ſaid ſhe, "my good kind Wilmot, call me Ella; for that was the name I was called by when I was a happy child; Elfrida is a fine lady and makes a great ſhew, but it was the poor Ella Overbury that was rich, for ſhe had every thing ſhe wiſhed for."

"And could you, Miſs Ella," ſaid Wilmot, "for I will always call you Miſs Ella when we can ſpeak together alone, could you wiſh to forget you had ever known me? to wiſh—"

"Forget you, Edmund, no; not now I have played with you, and wept with you, (for you always weep when I am ſorrowful)

and

and danced with you, I never can forget you; but then my father and mother.—"

"O Miſs Ella," ſaid the boy.

"Well, well," ſaid Elfrida, "ſuppoſe I was to die, Wilmot, and be buried juſt cloſe to the church-door, yonder, what would you ſay then? you would ſurely ſay ſhe is now happy, for ſhe no longer ſighs (as I do very often you know) to ſee thoſe ſhe muſt not ſee, becauſe ſhe muſt be rich; but what ſignifies riches, Wilmot? for my part, I ought to have been poor, for I ſhould like it, and ſhould ſay to myſelf, now this is right, that a child ſhould be what heaven has made its parents."

"Only ſtay, only be happy, my dear Ella," ſaid Wilmot "until I am a big boy, and I will ſoon find out how it comes to paſs that you muſt not own ſuch a father and mother as Captain and Mrs Overbury, for I have heard a deal about them, and can tell you the whole ſtory, when we are by ourſelves, how your mamma had like to have been taken away by wicked ruffians, and how your grandpapa and all his family were to have been murdered in Arcadia-houſe, and how Captain Overbury was the man that ſaved them, and how your mamma ought to have a greater fortune than Miſs Cluwyd, but was cheated by her mother-in-law; and I can, moreover, ſhew you the very ſpot where the great big boat lay, into which

which the ruffians intended to have put your mamma; for the pleaſure-boat, Mr. Cluwyd's old gardener tells me, is always moored there, in memory of that ſhocking affair; though Miſs Cluwyd does not know the reaſon, or ſhe would move it, becauſe ſhe loves to do every thing contrary to what your grandpapa liked."

"I would give the whole world," ſaid Elfrida," to hear it."

"Elfrida," ſaid Mrs. Cluwyd, obſerving her to look very grave, "what are you about, my dear? what melancholy trick have you got of viewing the church yard? You muſt notencourage her in it, Wilmot; I have caught her at it ſeveral times, and now deſire I may never have reaſon to mention it more. Come, come," continued this lady, "why do you not find out ſome play to divert each other? and be lively, Elfrida, and do not ſpoil your face by ſerious looks; it does not become a little girl to be ſerious."

Thus was their little intereſting converſation broken up, and though Elfrida, who ardently wiſhed to hear all Wilmot had to tell her, was evermore ſeeking opportunities, ſhe ſought in vain, for Elliſon, on his return, never left them a moment; ſhe, therefore, moſt reluctantly, bid adieu to every hope, until a Bath excurſion, (long talked of by the Elliſons) ſhould deliver them from his company,

company, and enable them to talk the matter over without interruption.

Two years having paſſed away, Wilmot began to think himſelf ſufficiently maſter of his pen to addreſs Captain Overbury, and intreat, in his daughter's name, juſt to be informed how he and his lady were in their health; for the too tenderly feeling child had apprehenſions for their ſafety and life, that embittered all her felicity, and ſhe declared ſhe ſhould die if ſhe found ſhe could never ſee them more.

The artleſs epiſtle touched even Mr. Overbury to the ſoul, and coſt the gentle mother of Elfrida abundance of tears; he confeſſed it was doing violence to his own, as well as his wife's nature, to check ſo innocent and ſo friendly a correſpondent, but the fate of their Ella was hinged upon their diſcretion and reſolution, and the Captain at length compelled himſelf to return profeſſions of high diſpleaſure at their child's diſobedience of their poſitive commands, enjoining her not to break her father's heart by offending her noble relation, or forfeit her mother's tendereſt affection, by undoing what they had done to make her fortune.

Wilmot, upon this ill ſucceſs, wept over the ſtern letter; but upon reading it again and again, fancied he ſaw comfort for his Ella through all the auſterity of its contents.

"They

"They are alive," ſaid he, "and that is one moſt happy piece of news for her; and, moreover, I do verily believe, they are only acting a part, like the players upon the ſtage, when they ſay unkind things, for they muſt love their child in ſpite of all their ambition or wiſdom; and it is all a ſham to write the contrary, that Miſs Cluwyd may not be offended with them, if ever ſhe ſhould find out what I have done."

Whole weeks paſſed, though they daily ſaw each other for hours, before Wilmot could even whiſper to Elfrida what he had done, ſo cloſely did Elliſon watch them, for the ſole pleaſure of teizing, for nothing delighted this boy more than to ſee Wilmot's chagrin, when he contrived to hold him at a diſtance from Elfrida, while he romped with her and tormented her, without his being able to prevent it, or authorized to complain of his ill-natured behavior.

One morning, however, Elliſon happening to be called ſuddenly away by his papa, Wilmot, in few words, gave her to underſtand he had heard from her father, and that both he and her mother were well.

Elfrida's eyes thanked him a thouſand times; for before ſhe could ſpeak a ſingle word Elliſon was back; ſhe alſo, on dancing with him, gratefully preferred his hand, and made him the happieſt fellow upon earth,

the

the firſt poſſible moment ſhe could utter ſo much to him, unobſerved, that next to her dear father and mother, ſhe would love him as long as ſhe lived.

"I proteſt," ſaid Miſs Cluwyd to Mr. Elliſon, as practice and years improved her little relation, "I am enraptured with the mode we have hit upon for educating our children; I can actually ſee the boys poliſh in Elfrida's hands, whilſt every mental grace is called forth in the girl, as if for their inculcation; if they were a parcel of Miſſes, we ſhould have them already pulling caps, from ſome folly or other, but it is now who ſhall ſhew moſt good humor and improvement."

Mr. Elliſon made a very florid reply to this addreſs, complimenting the lady with the original thought of their ſo much admired ſyſtem, and concluded with ſaying it would have unending advantages.

"Moreover, Sir," replied the lady, quite intoxicated with the praiſes he beſtowed upon her, "an evil, of all others the moſt to be dreaded for a girl, *reading romances*, will be guarded againſt; books, my good Sir, that give ſuch falſe pictures of life, as turn the heads of female children, even in their leadingſtrings; and no wonder, therefore, that their effects are baneful in an adult ſtate."

Mr. Elliſon extolled the juſtneſs of her ſentiments, and the delicacy of her feelings, and

and ſaid Elfrida's mind, under her formation, would be as pure as her perſon was lovely, and ſhe would ſhew the world what a woman of honor and elegance ought to be.

But though Miſs Cluwyd ſo highly diſapproved of *novel-reading* in the *young*, ſhe ſeemed to conſider that amuſement as the natural food of the mind, for ladies of a certain age; her cloſet was accordingly furniſhed with every production of the eventful kind, from the virtuous Pamela, down to the laſt publication of her day; for no ſooner did the public prints announce a new work than it was purchaſed by her; and, provided it treated largely of love, and lover-like embarraſſment, ſhe was always well ſatisfied; and frequently would ſhe retire to this her *ſanctum ſanctorum*, (for no human being was ſuffered to approach it) to ſoothe her tender recollection, and her tender hopes, by the peruſal of ſome ſoft hiſtory, of which her imagination often painted Captain Overbury the hero, and, of courſe, her all-amiable ſelf the heroine, and theſe unbendings, as ſhe called them, conſtituted the firſt pleaſures of her life.

It was true, indeed, Elfrida had never ſeen what wiſdom pronounced an idle author; or heard of thoſe ſpirited damſels, who can fly away with their lovers on an acquaintance of a few days old, and forget the years of

of obligation they owe to the beſt of fathers and of mothers; but then ſhe was equally unapprized of the dangers to which youth is expoſed, and of the duties of the individual, the claims of ſociety, and the nice diſtinctions of good ſenſe, and information, upon every trying occaſion, as depicted by a Brooks, a Sheridan, a Burney, with every noble, prudent, elegant and uſeful leſſon they contain; not to mention her own very peculiar ſituation; for having no idea that ſhe was not to love the companion of her infancy, of whatever ſex, ſhe cheriſhed all that lively, ſtrong, and heart-felt affection, for Wilmot, which a couple of ſchool-girls frequently imbibe for each other, and which renders them, through every change and chance, the beloved correſpondent, the ſympathizing friend, the firſt and laſt object of affectionate remembrance; for, ſtrange to tell, whilſt the ſelf-applauding Miſs Cluwyd drank compliments from the fountain-head of flattery, upon her diſcreet management, and exalted ideas, and was waiting for the accompliſhment of her own tender wiſhes, it never once occurred to her, that the color of Elfrida's life might depend upon her infant impreſſions; nature having given a ſuſceptibility of heart, and a conſtancy of temper, ill ſuited to the ductility of conduct, which, at ſome diſtant period, ſhe might be inclined to require of her in the

moſt important article of human judgment, and human deciſion.

AN ADVENTURE.

The boys having leave to ſpend a day at the village, to amuſe themſelves as ſpectators of thoſe ruſtic ſports which a country wake ever gives riſe to, had their attention called, amongſt other particulars, to a poor captive pigeon, led about by a hind, with a ſtring to its foot, condemned to be ſhot at by archers, which was to be the prize of the beſt markſman, who gave it its death's wound.

Wilmot's gentle heart was intereſted in its diſtreſs; was Elfrida here, ſaid he to Elliſon, (who thought proper to laugh at him for his ſpeech) how tenderly would ſhe interfere to ſave that innocent bird's life! There were a number of ſmart girls aſſembled, in the face of every one of whom Wilmot ſought for a deliverer for the poor bird, but ſought in vain; at length he got the better of every conſideration but his own humanity, and the pleaſure Elfrida would feel, when ſhe heard the ſtory of the bird's endangered ſafety and reſcue; he offered the man half a crown for it, and having obtained it, bore it off in ſilent exultation, and taking abrupt leave of Elliſon

and

and the other company, ran to Arcadia, though near four miles, begging Elfrida to accept it; and beſpeaking her kindneſs for it, by the ſhort tale he told her, of its critical eſcape from the hands of ruffians, without hinting a ſyllable of the part he had acted upon the occaſion.

Elfrida careſſed the bird, and had juſt promiſed to take the utmoſt care of it, when Elliſon, who had his preſentiment of Wilmot's intentions, came in, and beheld what he ſuſpected realized.

"I thought as much," ſaid he, "you are, I muſt needs tell you, a very artful boy, Wilmot, and can play humanity to the life to pleaſe Elfrida, who fancies it all true, and doats upon you, I can ſee it, for your hypocriſy. I pitied the bird as much as you did, but thought I had no right to rob the poor people of their diverſion, though you minded nothing but your own whims, and was called a bold and buſy lad, even by the fellow that took your half-crown, for what is not worth more than two-pence of anybodies money."

"And was it you, Wilmot," ſaid the delighted Elfrida, "that ſaved its life? you never told me a word of it; good-natured, modeſt, kind-hearted Wilmot."

"And yet," ſaid Elliſon, "if I had done the very ſame thing, you would have

blamed me, though you ſo abundantly praiſe him."

"Never, never," ſaid Elfrida, "for be aſſured, were you once to become, as gentle, and as generous, I ſhould love you juſt as well; it is the heart, the heart, Maſter Elliſon, let it be in whoſe breaſt it may."

Thus a kind of rivalſhip commenced in their very childhood, which, from the oppoſite temper of the boys, ſtrongly marked their characters; for, though they both loved Elfrida, nothing could be more unlike than their mode of behaviour to her.

Wilmot, the mild, the liberal-minded Wilmot, preferred her happineſs to his own; or, more properly, could only be happy from knowing Elfrida ſo; whereas Elliſon, fond of tormenting, loved to quarrel, and make it up at every meeting, for which purpoſe he would blot her copy-book, blunt her pencils, ſteal her compaſſes, and ſnap the ſtrings of her guitar; upon all which occaſions Wilmot would inſtantly, and ſilently ſet to work, in order to ſoften theſe ill-natured ſtrokes, and ſo diligent, and ſo expert was he, that it was no unuſual thing for her to have tears of ſorrow trembling in her eyes, at the effects of Elliſon's malice, and a ſmile of thankfulneſs playing about her mouth, for the kind ſervices of Wilmot.

At length, however, the long-wiſhed for hour arrived, for Wilmot's uninterruptedly telling

telling her all he heard of her dear father and mother, for Maſter Elliſon was taken by his family, for a whole week, to Bath; and Wilmot and Elfrida were the happieſt of beings; they walked, they talked, they performed all their taſks together, and the only conteſt between them was, which ſhould oblige the moſt.

But theſe days of ſunſhine were of ſhort continuance, for Elliſon returned, unexpectedly returned, and hearing they had rambled into the park, attended only by one ſervant, ſallied forth, in all the bitterneſs of diſcontent, to blight their felicity.

It was, indeed, a kind of critical moment, for Wilmot having repeated the ſtory of the intended robbery and murder every day, during Elliſon's abſence, and promiſed, the firſt fine afternoon, to lead Elfrida to the ſpot, whence her mamma was to have been carried by the wicked valet; they had, the very afternoon of Elliſon's return, obtained leave (Miſs Cluwyd and Mrs. Wilmot being ſet in to hear a funeral-ſermon read, which was to be preached the following Sunday) to walk where they pleaſed; ſo deſiring the ſervant to keep his eye upon them, without cloſely following, they had gone to the angle, where the pleaſure-boat was ſtationed, and Elfrida being helped into it, at her earneſt requeſt, by Wilmot, ſat down,

bending over the ſide towards him; and now, ſaid ſhe, once again, as you ſtand on the bank, tell me the whole ſtory, for methinks I ſhall now feel it doubly affecting.

In this ſituation they were found by Eliſon, who, in order to frighten them, but by no means aware of the conſequences of ſuch an action, ſtole, unperceived, round the tree to which the boat was hooked, and, looſening the ſlender cable, off it went with the utmoſt rapidity.

Elfrida wrung her hands in the deepeſt diſtreſs; and Wilmot, unable to ſave her, ſprung into the water, catching hold of the rope (having learned a little to ſwim) ſoon recovered himſelf, and got into the boat, ſaying, "we will, Miſs Ella, die together, and that cruel boy, ſhall, in one reſpect, be diſappointed; he ſhall not enjoy my tears for your loſs."

"Let us kneel down and pray," ſaid Elfrida, "who knows, my good Wilmot, what Providence may do for us?"

The wind and tide ſtanding both out for ſea, the diſtreſſed and lovely children were carried to a great diſtance from the ſhore, when the terrified Elfrida ſunk almoſt lifeleſs at Wilmot's feet, who raiſed her head, kiſſed her, wept over her, comforted and ſupported her, to the beſt of his poor power, for he was in deſpair himſelf upon her

her account, and, upon her account, inſenſible of his own danger.

Elliſon, diſcovering how far beyond his own intention he had carried his ill-natured jeſt, was almoſt frantic; he ſent the ſervant to call for help, while he ſtrained his eyeballs to look after them, until leſſening and leſſening upon his view, as their bark now roſe and fell with the undulating water, he could perceive them no longer, and he would have thrown himſelf in the ſea, if the ſervant, who moſt ſeaſonably returned, had not prevented him; or beat himſelf againſt the ground, nor was it, but by dint of ſuperior force they reſtrained his violence.

The news of the fatal accident no ſooner reached the hall, than Miſs Cluwyd was in fits, Mrs. and Mr. Wilmot in fearful aſtoniſhment, and the whole family running every way but the right, and propoſing every thing but what common ſenſe might have dictated, to ride along the ſhore and watch their courſe.

A fiſhing-boat was at laſt got off after them, with promiſes of high reward if they brought them ſafe back; it returned, however, in a few hours, with the ſad tidings that there was not a ſingle trace of them, and the ſea ſo rough, that there could be ſmall doubt of their having periſhed.

The houſe, the neighborhood, were thrown into lamentations; every beauty

of Elfrida, every worthy action of Wilmot, were the univerſal ſubjects with all that knew them; and the wretched Elliſon was confined to his bed, in a ſtate, from ſhame, tenderneſs, and bitter remorſe, little ſhort of diſtraction.

But heaven had not forgot to be gracious. Infinite, indeed, was their danger, and almoſt miraculous their preſervation; up the Severn-ſea they went, and Elfrida, deriving courage from deſperation, became the ſupport of the now deſponding and broken-hearted Wilmot.

What, Wilmot," ſaid ſhe, " would my dear father and mother ſay, if they were now to behold me; was it to be buried in the deep that they gave me up to ſtrangers, and hid their faces from me? O, Wilmot, had they but been contented to let their child be poor, this had never happened, and your precious life, beſt of all good, good boys, would not have been cut off, in this untimely manner, by one that loves you as ſhe does herſelf,"

" O talk not of my life, Miſs Ella," ſaid Wilmot, " what is the loſs of my life compared to yours? the world has nothing like you; could I but have ſaved you, I ſhould have died well ſatisfied."

" And you would have hee moſt cruel for ſo doing," ſaid Elfrida, " for, even in the arms of my deareſt father and mother, I muſt

I muſt have grieved for you. O may they never know how well I loved them, though they caſt me off, or that it was my delight to hear all I could of them, who have undone me, as well as you, Wilmot; and yet, yet Wilmot, I can ſee it, you both pity and forgive me."

"Forgive you," ſaid Wilmot, "what can you mean by forgiveneſs, you that are an angel upon earth, to talk of being forgiven, and muſt you periſh before my eyes?"

"No, Wilmot, no," putting her little arms around him, "we will neither of us ſee the other die, that could not be borne, we will depart together."

At this moment, when hope itſelf expired, they were perceived by ſome cottagers by the ſea-ſide, a good man and his wife, who delighted in humane offices.

The woman firſt diſtinguiſhed them, and beſought her huſband to be quick to ſave; "It is, I am certain," ſaid ſhe, "the Arcadian pleaſure-boat, with at leaſt two perſons in it; how ſmall they appear, but they hold out their hands in token of diſtreſs; O fly," ſaid ſhe, "fly, or they muſt be loſt."

The good man, who was a fiſher by trade, made haſte to put off his bark, when Wilmot, perceiving him, vainly tore his lungs to pieces, in beſeeching him to ſave them,

for he was too far diſtant to hear even the ſound of his voice.

At length he came up with them, ſo near as to be able to throw a rope, with a wide nooſe over the pole of their boat, which, drawing to a cloſe knot, he towed them towards him, and their ſpirits revived; but juſt in the inſtant when they believed themſelves ſafe, the pole broke ſhort, and the ſhock almoſt filled them with water, ſo that their death appeared inevitable; the fiſherman, however, threw the rope to them a ſecond time, and bid them hold faſt, until he could reach them, and he was ſcarcely within the diſtance neceſſary for pulling them to him when their boat ſunk, and they were ſafely lifted into his; nor had he, by dint of hard labor, got back many minutes, before a gale ſprung up, that muſt have been fatal to them all.

The wife, who had been an anxious ſpectator of the ſcene, received them in her arms with almoſt maternal tenderneſs and welcomed them to her cottage.

"Put this dear child to bed," ſaid Wilmot, "I am well already, now we are ſafe; but ſhe is all wet, and much too delicate to bear what ſhe has met with."

Mrs. Jenkins approved the requeſt, and, warming the bed, undreſſed Elfrida, giving her ſome hot cowſlip wine to drink, and ſeated herſelf on the bedſide to watch her, whilſt

whilſt Wilmot and the fiſherman began to chat over a can of ale.

"Was I a ſovereign prince," ſaid Wilmot, "I would build a palace upon this ſpot, and you, Mr. Jenkins, ſhould live in it; the child you have preſerved will have a large fortune; I, alas, have nothing but my thanks to give you; and yet I muſt believe my father and mother will not let you go wholly unrewarded."

Elfrida being fallen into a ſweet ſleep, the wife came forward, and aſked who ſhe might be, and what was her name.

"Her name," ſaid Wilmot, "is Ella." The woman ſtared, and, almoſt breathleſs, cried "Ella, what?"

"Overbury," replied Wilmot.

The woman gave a loud ſcream, which awakened Elfrida.

"Captain Overbury's child," cried ſhe, "my heart tells me ſo, and I will believe it. Now, now," ſaid ſhe, "I have repaid him for ſaving me from being murdered."

Elfrida hung about her neck, and would be dreſſed and get up, "if you know my father," ſaid ſhe, "tell me all, for though he will not own me, I love him as I do my own life."

"Not own you," ſaid Hannah, for it was Mrs. Overbury's Hannah, they were with, "Captain Overbury, the beſt, and the handſomeſt,

ſomeſt, and the nobleſt of men, not own his child; what witchcraft, what conjuration, can occaſion it!

"To make me rich," ſaid the weeping Elfrida, "while they are poor."

"Explain this, my dear," ſaid Hannah to Wilmot, "for I cannot underſtand it."

Wilmot then told her how Miſs Ella had been brought to Arcadia, and how he had wrote to the Captain, and what a ſevere anſwer he had received, and how ſhe was called Elfrida inſtead of Ella, and how it came to paſs that they had lived, and were ſo near dying together.

"The wicked, wicked tyrant! ſaid Hannah, "the old cat, as Mrs. Cluwyd juſtly called her; to rob the bleſſed infant of her parents and her name, for a little pelf; but it ſhall go hard if I am not even with her yet, before I die. Elfrida, to be ſure, has a more *kickſhawiſh* ſound, but I wonder if her mother was ever the worſe for being called Ella."

Elfrida being a little more compoſed, ſuddenly clapped her hands together; "Heaven forgive us, my own Wilmot," ſaid ſhe, "for forgetting the diſtreſs our accident muſt have given the hearts of all thoſe that love us."

"True," ſaid Wilmot, "and I ought, indeed, to bluſh, for my father and mother will ſuffer not a little upon my account.

Cannot

Cannot we, my good friends," (to Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins) "procure ſome one to inform them we are ſafe?"

Jenkins ſaid he would go himſelf, and mounting his poney, bid them make themſelves happy till his return, and was ſetting off for Arcadia, but was ſtopped by his wife.

"I muſt tutor you a little," ſaid Hannah, "before you ſee that horrid Mrs. Cluwyd, for ſhe would rather (I know the nature of her) the child ſhould have been loſt, than that I ſhould have the ſaving of her; and for why? becauſe it muſt make me happier than it could any other perſon; and ſo great is her hatred of me, that it would kill her to hear I was happy."

"Impoſſible," ſaid Wilmot, "there cannot be ſuch a fiend in human ſhape."

"But there is," ſaid Hannah, "and Miſs Cluwyd (the vain old fool, to be called Miſs at this time of day) is the very ſhe; but I can *nick* her, and I will tell you how; I am ſo altered, and it is ſo long ſince ſhe has ſeen me, ſhe will not know me; and ſo I wonder if it is not all fair and above-board to paſs myſelf off for a ſtranger, ſeeing I mean no harm by it, and only for the pleaſure of now and then talking with this child, who ſhe would never let me come within the breath of, if ſhe hears I lived with her mother."

The children beſought Jenkins to be careful what he ſaid, for that ſince they had found Captain and Mrs. Overbury's Hannah, they would not loſe her again for all the world. Jenkins promiſed to manage them to *a tee*, and they all rejoiced in Hannah's timely caution, for it was plain, if Miſs Cluwyd would not let Miſs Ella even mention her own father and mother, ſhe would never permit her to take notice of one ſo dear to them, and who had, in the very goodneſs of her heart, ſaid and done many offenſive things to both ladies. "For how ſhould I ever foreſee," ſaid Hannah, "that the time ſhould cõme, when I ſhould be glad to enter their houſe; and I would creep and cringe in the loweſt manner to get in, Miſs Ella, befor eI would be denied the ſight of you; and now you have recovered your fright a little, I can ſee you are the very *moral* of the Captain."

"I hope," ſaid Elfrida, "I ſhall now be excuſed, if I own myſelf not over fond of this young maſter; I wonder what puniſhment will be thought due for his conduct; a naughty, naughty boy, to ſport ſo wantonly with our ſafety and lives."

"We muſt forgive him," ſaid Wilmot, "for his friends will call it only a ſchool-boy trick; and I dare believe he has been almoſt as much frightened as ourſelves."

"You

"You are quite wrong, indeed, Wilmot," ſaid Elfrida, "I can think it poſſible for one bad boy to corrupt another; but Elliſon's miſchief is all his own; if he would have taken leſſons from you, he would have been as good as you."

"Hold, Miſs Ella, you forget the unhappy notions he picks up amongſt the ſervants; and the pride his father and mother put into his head, becauſe he is born to a fortune; to be ſure, I muſt own, he loves miſchief better than any earthly thing; but then I have often ſeen him ſo ſorry for his faults, that he has given himſelf almoſt as much credit with me as if he was always good."

"Now that is ſo like Captain Overbury," ſaid Hannah, "he was for excuſing every body, and was almoſt breaking his heart, leſt the fellows that would have murdered us all, ſhould be hanged; when I ſolemnly declare, if I had been quite certain they would have reſted in their graves, as the valet does (though the biggeſt rogue of all) I ſhould have been glad to have had their lives; for why? they would not have ſpared mine."

"See, Mrs. Jenkins," ſaid Elfrida, "how Wilmot ſhakes his head; and with reaſon, for we ought not to encourage a ſpirit of ill-will towards any body, not even our worſt of enemies."

"I ſhall

"I ſhall fancy you a couple of angels by-and-by, if you talk ſo," ſaid Hannah, "for you preach as well as a parſon, and I almoſt think what I have ſpoken is wicked, becauſe you ſay it is."

She now related the whole hiſtory of the attack upon Arcadia-houſe, to the children, told them all her terrors, and all her truſt in the Captain's protection; and, at length, having wearied herſelf, even upon her favorite ſubject, ſhe propoſed they ſhould try to ſleep till morning.

Wilmot was happy upon Elfrida's account, to hear her mention ſleep, for he had forgot ſuch a thing was neceſſary; ſo Hannah once more put her young miſtreſs (as ſhe called her) to bed, and it was ſettled that Wilmot and ſhe ſhould take their repoſe in two wicker chairs, that filled up the oppoſite receſſes of the chimney; Hannah could not, however, forbear mentioning the misfortune ſhe and her huſband had met with, for that without any neglect or miſmanagement of theirs, their cattle had died, and their rent fallen ſo heavy, that they were obliged to give up their farm, and poor Richard thought he could turn his hand to nothing better than being a fiſherman; and a fiſherman he had been to a glorious purpoſe, ſince he had ſaved their precious lives, for many people might have dwelt in the ſame cottage, and not have given the look-

out

out to the ſea they did, from kind feelings for their fellow-creatures; or, if they had even looked out, they might not have been ſo able, or ſo quick, to ſave them as her huſband; and ſhe believed every thing was ordered for the beſt, and would never more repine at what ſeemed croſs accidents; for why? they often occaſioned the moſt comfortable endings; and with this ſtroke of ſound philoſophy ſhe concluded, and betook herſelf to reſt.

AN HINT.

They were awakened early the next morning, by the arrival of Mr. Wilmot and young Elliſon, the firſt of which embraced the children with tenderneſs, and the ſecond knelt to Elfrida for pardon.

"Forgive me," ſaid he, "a misfortune I never intended to bring upon you; I, myſelf, (as you may ſee by my paleneſs) ſhould have died if you had not been preſerved; we will ſhew our joy, Miſs Elfrida (he was even ſo humbled as to call her *reſpectfully* Miſs Elfrida, inſtead of tauntingly, as was his cuſtom whenever he gave her that addition) by rewarding your deliverer; Mr. Wilmot will make Jenkins clerk of the pariſh, a place which now happens to be vacant,

cant, and which Jenkins is glad to accept; and I will give his wife four ſheep and a cow, and Miſs Cluwyd ſays they ſhall live in the little lodge under the park wall, and I will do every thing elſe you can wiſh to be done for them, if you will only pity and forgive me."

Elfrida gave him her hand, but turned her face from him, and ſhuddered to think what a miſchievous ſpirit he poſſeſſed; whilſt Wilmot forgot his reſentment in his generoſity to Jenkins, and very cordially received his congratulations.

The coach was left at ſome diſtance, for there was only a foot and horſe road to the cottage, and Elfrida was carried up to it by Jenkins; "I will not go a ſtep further," ſaid ſhe, ſtopping at the door," unleſs your wife is with us; and I wiſh, Wilmot, you and I could live with the good creatures for ever."

Not a day paſſed without Elfrida's ſlipping to the lodge, attended, generally, by both the boys; but, though ſo much obliged to Elliſon, Hannah could not bring her heart, ſhe ſaid, to own him, but quite the reverſe; yet did he leave no means uneſſayed to buy her good opinion, conſequently her good report; whereas Elfrida and Wilmot, were as natural to her, ſhe proteſted, as her own fleſh and blood.

Miſs

Miſs Cluwyd, whoſe romantic temper was not of that kind, that admires ſimplicity of manners, and artleſſneſs of addreſs in the individual, was perfectly ſatisfied with thanking Richard, and bidding him thank his wife in her name, and tell her ſhe might turn her cow and ſheep into a corner of the park, and without once deſiring to ſee her, or taking farther notice of the matter; however ſhe condemned not the warm gratitude of Elfrida's heart, or denied her beſtowing repeated favors upon this honeſt couple; and it was ſettled amongſt Richard, his wife, Elfrida and Wilmot, that every care ſhould be taken not to offend this high lady, and of courſe that the names of Hannah and Ella ſhould never be uttered out of the lodge (except between Wilmot and Elfrida at proper ſeaſons) and the poor Mrs. Jenkins, like the cuckow, for two whole days, never varied her note, at the end of which ſhe could pronounce Elfrida as readily as Ella.

Maſter Elliſon having quite recovered himſelf, relapſed into his old practices of teizing; and having perſuaded Elfrida to walk with him round the lawn, out of ſport, he began to abuſe her favorite; "a heavy, ſtupid, watery-headed lad;" and ſeveral other, equally ill-natured epithets, did he beſtow upon him.

"You

"You bad, bad gentleman," ſaid Elfrida, "how richly do you deſerve to be puniſhed! You are committing two faults in one; for what you ſay is both untrue and unjuſt, and I will only love him the more; and now you provoke me, Sir, I will tell you what I think of you; you are proud, Maſter Elliſon; you are cruel, Maſter Elliſon; and you are ungrateful, Maſter Elliſon; for though *my* Wilmot knows I can only fear you, he never ſpoke of you, in your abſence, but with good humor and reſpect, except when you had like to have drowned me, Sir."

"And what, my dear creature," ſaid Elliſon, "what did he ſay of me then?"

"I could tell you, Sir," replied Elfrida.

"You dare not tell me, Miſs."

"Dare not, Maſter Elliſon! how dare not?"

"Becauſe you know I would be even with him," returned Elliſon."

"What, Sir," ſaid the alarmed Elfrida, "would you quarrel with him for the words your own behavior drew from him?"

"What were his words, Miſs?"

"He only ſaid," replied the timid child, "you loved miſchief better than any thing elſe in the whole world, and, ſchool-boy like, never conſidered what it would lead to; was there any harm in that? could you bear him ill-will, Maſter Elliſon, for that? and

and indeed he ſaid no more, though you was ſo very, *very* naughty."

Elliſon laughed; "what a taking you put yourſelf in, Elfrida, if you were only a few years older this would be very fine; why, child, you would be in love with this milk-ſop gentleman."

"I could never love him better than I do," ſaid Elfrida, "if I was ever ſo old; and I hope there would be no harm, at any age, in loving ſuch a boy as Maſter Wilmot."

"Your *own*, *own* Wilmot," returned Elliſon, ſneering."

"Yes, Maſter Elliſon, my *own*, *own* Wilmot; for did he not ſave my life, Sir? and does he not—"

"Love you; I warrant you would ſay," replied Elliſon, "but I can tell him," continued he, "he had much better let it alone; and, ſince you provoke me, Miſs Elfrida, I have a great mind not to ſcold you, as you have done me; but to tell Miſs Cluwyd how you treat me, and run from me to him, and ſhun me, and ſcorn me, Miſs, as if I was not worthy the honor of your acquaintance; whilſt this poor Parſon's ſon, that has nothing to depend upon but his wit, and his learning, and his art, Miſs, is your eternal and choſen companion."

Elfrida, for the firſt time in her life, from the dictates of her own mind, felt the painful

ful neceſſity of diſſembling; "I muſt," ſaid ſhe, "hide my affection for Wilmot, as I do that of my dear father and mother; what a little deceiver the world will make of me! wicked, cruel world; when a child like me muſt learn to ſpeak what ſhe does not think, and look what ſhe does not feel!"

Elliſon, who had walked from her, to laugh at his own wit, and enjoy the idea of having tormented her, now rejoined her, and ſeemed to expect a reply to his threatening.

Elfrida attempted to ſmile upon him, but was ſo new at the buſineſs of fineſſing, that ſhe burſt into tears, and even Elliſon was touched by them.

"Come, come, Elfrida," ſaid he, "let us be friends again; I was only joking; but in very truth you ought not to love Wilmot ſo much as you do; for you will find Miſs Cluwyd, and every one elſe, will ſoon begin to take notice of it, and be very angry; but come, let us kiſs and forgive each other."

"I forgive you, Maſter Elliſon," ſaid Elfrida," "but if it is not pretty to love one boy, I am ſure it muſt not be right to kiſs another; and you ſhall ſee what a leſſon you have this day taught me; for though I am not yet twelve years old, I will be a child no more, nor will I play again with any boy."

"Indeed

"Indeed but you will," ſaid Elliſon, "if you are allowed to chooſe your playfellow; but do as you will for the preſent, we ſhall ſee how long you will be ſuffered to give yourſelf airs:" ſaying which he left her.

Never was mind more deranged than that of the innocent Elfrida; "Well, well," ſaid ſhe, "I muſt be unhappy; I loved but three people in the world, tenderly, and I muſt loſe them all, my father and mother, and Wilmot."

"O, Maſter Wilmot, are you there?" (for he came to meet her, on perceiving that Elliſon was gone home) "that ever Ella Overbury ſhould live to ſay ſhe is ſorry to ſee you."

"Sorry to ſee me!" repeated Wilmot.

"Why, yes," replied Elfrida, "it ſeems it will offend people to know me happy, as it always makes me to walk or talk with you; and I muſt never again, I am told, ſay I love you."

"This is Elliſon's work," ſaid Wilmot, "no other creature could have deviſed ſuch a thing; let us, then, Miſs Ella, learn to think what we muſt not ſpeak; in my heart I will raiſe a throne for you; you ſhall be my ſovereign and my monitor, and, whatever I am about to do or ſay, I will firſt aſk myſelf how it would pleaſe you, and act accordingly."

"Then,"

"Then," ſaid Elfrida, "this my dear Wilmot, this is our parting, the cloſing ſcene of our infant delights; farewel the joy of telling you my every thought; farewel the pleaſure of hearing yours; ſweet, ſweet pleaſures; it is painful, Wilmot, but I feel it is the laſt kind, ſincere word I muſt ſpeak to you; ſo, my dear, dear boy, farewel."

Wilmot turned from her to conceal the anguiſh her expreſſions gave him; and Elfrida, without once looking back, ran into the houſe.

From that hour, in order to fill up her time, her walking time, ſhe applied herſelf, with redoubled diligence, to her harpſichord and her pencil.

Miſs Cluwyd was ſurprized, "You were always a good girl, Elfrida," ſaid ſhe, "but you are now the beſt of children; how ſweetly you play that new air, though it is not quite ſo lively as I could wiſh it; and how elegantly you have painted that little bouquet; Maſter Elliſon will be charmed with you."

"Maſter Elliſon, Madam!" ſaid the aſtoniſhed and mortified girl.

"Yes, my love," replied Miſs Cluwyd, and you ſhall play it over to us in the afternoon; and I will ſhew him this finiſhed production, for there is equal taſte in your choice, and your diſpoſition of theſe flowers;

I am

I am proud, Elfrida, of your improvements."

"Maſter Elliſon hear me!" ſaid the dejected Elfrida, on Miſs Cluwyd's retiring, "is it for Maſter Elliſon's entertainment, that I have had my little talents cultivated? Impoſſible; I dare not look that way; no, no, there will be happy times, when I ſhall ſtill have it in my power to pleaſe a certain perſon, worth fifty Maſter Elliſon's."

Elfrida had no real pleaſure but at the lodge, where ſhe could talk of Wilmot without reſtraint, or being once thought to ſay too much in his favor.

"I find, Mrs. Jenkins," ſaid ſhe, one day, "for the myſtery is at length revealed to me, that my dear father and mother have ſacrificed their own, as well as their child's happineſs, to the world's opinion of good and evil."

"But let me aſk you, my good woman, if ſuch a ſmall houſe as even this lodge, would not be more pleaſing, more touching, if a parental roof, than all the fine things at the hall?"

"I wonder in my heart who was the firſt, Mrs. Jenkins, that fell into the miſtake, that a dozen diſhes were neceſſary for a dinner, when a bit of chicken and a bit of pudding, I know by experience, is ſufficient, and is more than thouſands of people ſit down to; and then the deſert, what is it but ſhew

and greatneſs? for a few ſtrawberries or raſpberries, on a little plate, would be quite as agreeable; and then a coach, my dear Hannah, to be ſure if people cannot walk, a coach is a very convenient thing; but for my part I prefer walking, on all occaſions, to our ridiculous airings, with the glaſſes up, to keep us from being choaked with duſt, and the blinds down, to prevent our being ſcorched by the ſun; for a coach, you know, cannot run over lawns and gardens, but muſt follow the beaten road; on the contrary, when you walk, you may chooſe your path, and ſhelter yourſelf in the ſhrubbery, or catch the freſh breezes from the ſea; is not all this true, Mrs. Jenkins? and do you not think as I do?"

Mrs. Jenkins ſaid, "People that were not born to ſuch things never felt the want of them; but then it was plain they valued them very highly, becauſe they always beheld, either with envy or reſpect, thoſe folks that poſſeſſed them, and this too if they had not another earthly perfection, but were old, ugly and ill-natured like Miſs Cluwyd; and ſuch as her who look poor people down to the ground; and for why? becauſe they happen to be rich and others poor; though they might, at the ſame time, thank their fortune for every civility they met with; for that if it was not for their wealth, which they have from inheritance,

they

they would find the odds of it, and be told their own daily, for not one of their *gim-cracks* is of their own earning; while ſweet is the bread of induſtry, Miſs Ella, and ſoft the pillow of labor; and who ſhall ſay that is not mine, that is the price of my honeſt toil? The butterfly has, we all know, its painted wings, but what has the ant? a houſe of her own building, and corn of her own gathering, and ſhe rejoices all the winter through in her ſtores."

"And yet, Hannah," ſaid Elfrida, "the world is not divided into merely the two kinds of people you mention; for there are idle poor as well as idle rich; I have ſeen them myſelf, in the next town, that would rather go without food than work for it, what do you ſay to them?"

"Ah Miſs Ella," ſaid Hannah, "theſe are the people that are idle from their cradle, or from a wrong bringing up, or from having *catched* ill thoughts from their betters; for bad examples are the undoing of numbers; but if you will look into life, you will find that Providence has ſo ordered it, that health ſhall depend upon ſtirring, which the gentle folks call exerciſe, and the poor hard work. Gentlefolks are obliged to invent themſelves buſineſs to keep the doctors from their door; for what is dancing, that coſts ſo much money and time to learn; and that rich people are ſo fond of? what

is it?" ſaid Hannah, "but ſtirring about, and with a witneſs too. I often laugh to think how a fine lady would ſtare if ſhe was aſked to put her hand, for a whole night through, to houſhold work, when all the time ſhe can ſpend it in jumping, becauſe it is faſhionable doings; and then you walking, and your riding, and your dreſſing, and your viſiting, is all to keep you from falling into lethargies, and whimſies, and dying of the hyp; juſt like hedging and ditching, that gives a man ſound ſleep and a good ſtomach; only the poor fellows are paid for it, do it for hire, Miſs Ella, the others from nonſenſe, taſte, and ſuch fiddle-faddle reaſons."

Hannah's logic ſtruck forcibly upon the mind of Elfrida; "I perceive," ſaid ſhe, "that polite living is an art deviſed by ſome enemy of good minds, to rob them of the pleaſures of ſincerity, and the joys of peace.

"Why, what a mockery, Hannah, is it, to hear people call that happineſs that pains them, and when they are moving by meaſure, and talking by rule, to call themſelves at liberty; what becomes of their hearts? do they not ſigh for freedom of thought, and freedom of ſpeech?"

"When I am with you, Mrs. Jenkins, my ſoul, I feel it, is in health, it is on my lips, it enquires, and it gains honeſt plain information;

information; but it ſickens, and, as it were, hides itſelf, when I am at Arcadia-houſe; where I muſt only ſpeak or look as faſhion dictates."

Wilmot was too obſervant of Elfrida's movements, to be long ignorant of her frequent viſits to Hannah, and contrived to meet her, one morning, without Elliſon, in her way home.

"Hannah," ſaid ſhe, "teaches me more than all my maſters; ſhe teaches me to diſtinguiſh between the arts and the true conduct of the world; for it is pride, Wilmot, and pride alone, that puts people upon hindering me from ſpeaking what I think; and how ſhould I do otherwiſe than hate the forms of *artfulneſs*, when they deny me the happineſs, not only of being myſelf, but of being honeſt and ſilent? I wiſh I could make you underſtand me; and I think I could, if you would, my good Wilmot, give me your attention."

Wilmot was ſilent.

"To love you," ſaid Elfrida, "is to love whatever is juſt and noble; but, becauſe I am a girl and you a boy, I muſt not ſee your merits; nay I can perceive it, ſince Elliſon poiſoned my peace, as I told you, by his narrow remarks, you ſhrink from my commendations; yet what do I commend in you, not your perſon, Wilmot, or your learning, or things of that kind, which

many, I doubt not, poſſeſs, as well as yourſelf, but your tender and compaſſionate temper, your openneſs, your truth. I tell you what, Wilmot, when I am a woman, I will not be acquainted with thoſe ſtrange people that can call deceit virtue, and truth vice; no, not if they were the firſt in the kingdom; and are not theſe right reaſons for what I do? on the contrary, if I could love ill in you, I ſhould, I know, be wicked; but it is by you I am taught all that makes me what I ought to be; and to your ſweet behavior, upon every mortifying occaſion, it is entirely owing, that my obedience to my father and mother's will has not broke my heart; but what is it you have not taught me that is good and amiable? how then can I help lamenting, what I muſt, nay what I am become to you, cold and diſtant, and turned out, I may ſay, from each other's heart."

Wilmot ſighed, ſtopped to look at her for a moment, and then walked on in ſilence.

" Nor muſt I henceforth liſten to your thoughts, or make you acquainted with mine; this, as I told you at our laſt parting, is to me a ſevere ſtroke, and I can only ſay it is a bad world, Wilmot, and bad forms, that can interrupt ſuch a friendſhip as ours; yet what cannot a bad world do? has it not robbed me of the beſt of fathers and mothers?

thers? do they know their little Ella now? no, Wilmot, no; they have ſold her for wealth, which they neither taſte nor touch; did they enjoy the pomp and ſplendor prepared for me, I would not repine at any price I paid for it; but their meal is a ſcanty one, whilſt the table I ſit down to is covered with delicacies; and I can only ſit and feel unhappy, becauſe it is not in my power to convey thoſe things before them, I ſuppoſe they would like."

Wilmot again ſtopped, and again walked on in ſilence.

"You cannot think, Wilmot, with what gentleneſs I would draw their curtains, or how lightly I would tread to promote their ſlumbers; and yet you can, for even this leſſon I learned from your kindneſs for me; for, don't you remember, one afternoon, when you came in the great parlor, and found me aſleep in a chair, that your firſt good-natured thought was, that I might take cold; and ſoft muſt have been the movement by which you put a handkerchief about my head, for you did not awake me; and when we walk, with what care you examine the path, that nothing may hurt me; no tangling thorn-buſh will you permit to take me priſoner; your own hands, my dear Edmund, how often have I ſeen them bleed in my ſervice? and when you think the ſun is too hot, or the air too cold, or

when it rains what friendly anxiety does your ſpeaking face wear until you have ſheltered me; and juſt ſo would I do by my dear father and mother; nor could any happineſs exceed that of watching a beloved father and mother's countenance, to obey, to ſerve, to delight them; and I could tell them ſuch tales, which I have read, and ſing them ſo many pretty ſongs, and I am ſure they would love me as I do you, for ſeeking to pleaſe them. O Wilmot, if Arcadia is a name, as we are told it is, for a bleſſed ſpot, wherever theſe revered relations were, would be Arcadia to me.

A PARTING.

But theſe conſtraints, however painful, were but the beginning of Elfrida's ſorrows; for ſhe ſaw the moment approaching, when ſhe was to be ſeparated from her beloved companion, and left alone with the boy ſhe dreaded as her worſt of foes.

A brother of Mr. Wilmot's having opened a boarding-houſe at Eton, under very flattering auſpices, for being a clergyman, he was intruſted with the care of many children of faſhion, was induced, from the character he heard of Edmund, and his improvements, to wiſh to have him with him, and

and making an offer of the ſort to his brother, it was, from the largeneſs of the parſon's family, joyfully accepted, and preparations were inſtantly ſet about for his departure.

Wilmot had now attained his fifteenth year, and was as the poet deſcribes:

Well-bred as if in courts his life had been,
Artleſs as tho' the world he ne'er had ſeen.

and had every proſpect of advancing himſelf by this change of ſituation.

He nevertheleſs drooped and ſighed; and Elfrida forgetting the check ſhe had received from Elliſon, openly declared her heart-felt concern at the news.

"We had but one mind," ſaid ſhe to him, "you were my other ſelf; my thoughts were underſtood by you without putting them into words; you ſoothed my little griefs; you increaſed my beſt joys; you were my brother and my friend. O what a treaſure am I going to loſe."

The morning which followed theſe ſad tidings, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw him upon the lawn, ſhe ran to meet him, though Elliſon was expected every moment at Arcadia.

"Wilmot," ſaid ſhe, "I will once again call you my own Wilmot, will you always love the poor Ella; will neither diſtance of time, nor the gay London world, cauſe you

to forget me; I never could forget you in any place, but here it would be impoſſible; every flower that blows; the pigeon you gave me, the emblem of your gentleneſs and innocence, as well as living teſtimony of your kind-heartedneſs; the riſing, the ſetting ſun, the moon-light, whatever, we have enjoyed or admired together, will meet my eyes, connected with your image. You weep, Edmund, are your tears intended to tell me what I would rejoice to hear?"

Wilmot was obliged to walk from her, for her expreſſions he ſaid were not to be borne, and Elliſon arriving, he called up his beſt looks, and having taken a turn in the ſhrubbery, followed Elfrida into the houſe.

In the afternoon ſhe ſtole another moment to ſpeak to him.

"That you are leſs attached to me than I am to you, Wilmot, witneſs my lamentations; I think of nothing, dream of nothing, but our parting; while you contentedly ſubmit yourſelf to your father's will; and ſo you ought; I love your obedience, but am mortified by your compoſure; and yet, if you were affected as I am, it would kill me downright."

The enſuing morning ſhe again joined him, before Elliſon was come down from the Grange.

"Ah, Wilmot," ſaid ſhe, "how near is that ſame Eton to London? in London you

you would find Ella Overbury's heart; it is with her poor father and mother; ſhould, therefore, either buſineſs or amuſement call you to that city of cities, would you not? ye sI am ſure you would ſee my dear relations; and tell them, Edmund, if ever that happy time does arrive, how their Ella is grown (for I am Ella to them) and how good ſhe tries to be; how much you have taught her, in her ſix years and a half baniſhment; but, above all the reſt, tell them what things you have done for me, at the hazard of your own life done for me; nay, my Wilmot, lay the wholebefore them, or they will never know how much you deſerve to be loved by them; and have you not been more to me than twenty brothers could have been, cut off as I am from all manner of relationſhip, except this Miſs Cluwyd, who decks me out in fine clothes, as if fine clothes could cure a wounded mind. Nor don't you fear that they will not eſteem and reſpect you, when you tell them how dear you are to their little girl; will you then, Fdmund, will you ſee them?"

Wilmot could not ſpeak, but looking all he had in his heart, he tore himſelf from her, before Elliſon came to find them together, which was a ſin of the deepeſt die.

Wilmot's dſtreſs of mind had a ſource beyond the preſent grievance; young as he

was

was, he was not without ideas he durſt not mention to Elfrida, for fear of alarming her innocent heart.

He knew it was not for him to look up to ſuch a girl, with hope, and could plainly perceive that Elliſon was encouraged to form expectations fatal to his feelings. He alſo wiſhed her to reſtrain her tenderneſs for both their ſakes, and had moſt painful forbodings he ſhould never ſee her more; thus tortured on all ſides, and finding that every repeated interview only weakened his reſolution, and ſtrengthened his regret, he abruptly broke up their little converſations, that wrung his heart-ſtrings, and walked every way but to Arcadia.

The moſt ſolitary and lonely paths were frequented by him during the day, and he paſſed the nights almoſt ſleepleſs, until illneſs obtained him a whole month's reſpite, and his joy became his cure; for he had ſettled it in his own breaſt to go to Mrs. Jenkins, as ſoon as he was able, and talk with her upon ſome matters of the neareſt concern to his peace.

"Mrs. Jenkins," ſaid he, "you loved your miſtreſs, and you love her daughter."

"Can you tell me who does not love her," ſaid Hannah, "except that tormenting Maſter Elliſon? nay he, in his own way."

"Hear

"Hear me, Mrs. Jenkins," ſaid Wilmot, "and name not any thing ſo foreign to my purpoſe, as Maſter Elliſon, I beſeech you. It is my misfortune, Mrs. Jenkins, to be now grown too big a boy, to be indulged as I have been, without putting notions into peoples heads that would offend them; Miſs Ella is much too open, and too young to be truſted with a knowledge of my wiſhes; but I muſt hear of her health, Mrs. Jenkins, her couſin's behavior to her; Maſter Elliſon's; you underſtand me."

Hannah was melted. "Ah poor dear, dear Maſter Wilmot," ſaid ſhe, "how happy you deſerve to be! and yet, I fear —"

"Mrs. Jenkins," ſaid Wilmot, "if you could ſee my heart you would hate me; for I wiſh, (Heaven forgive me) the boat had ſunk with us, for then you know we ſhould have been happy together."

"You are quite wrong, Maſter Wilmot, what then, you make nothing of the afflictioninto which your father and mother would have been plunged, or of what Captain and Mrs. Overbury would have ſuffered."

"Never mention it," ſaid Wilmot "their hearts, with all their perfections, muſt be marble, to hold ſuch a child at a diſtance, and ſacrifice her peace of mind for a fortune; fortune, Mrs. Jenkins, will never make Miſs Ella Overbury happy; a cottage and a competency, are beſt ſuited to her nature;

the

the life I read of in the poets, for ſhe is all humility and ſweetneſs; but I ſhall never ſee her more; however, Mrs. Jenkins, I muſt hope you will give me leave to write to you, and that you will have the goodneſs to write to me in return, and tell me how ſhe looks, and what ſhe ſays, and where ſhe goes, for I ſhall be miſerable if I do not hear all about her."

"Dear young gentleman," ſaid Hannah, "I am but a poor pen-woman; however, what I can do to content you I will; and the beſt of the matter is, that if I am not able to do you good, I can do you no harm; and yet, was I worthy to adviſe you, I think you had better try to forget her, before it comes to downright love."

"Heaven and earth!" cried Wilmot, my whole ſoul is hers already; I live but for her."

"What a pity it is," ſaid Hannah, "for ſhould ſhe be Mrs. Elliſon—"

"Bliſters, bliſters on your tongue," ſaid the otherwiſe all gentle Wilmot, "prophane not my Ella's name, by joining it with his; he cannot deſerve her; he has no tender feelings, Mrs. Jenkins; can enjoy her mortification, her diſtreſs. What have I not ſeen him enjoy of cruelty and ill-nature? if he was good and kind, his fortune is ſo large, I could wiſh him to enrich that angel; but his temper would kill her; it would be the lion

lion and the lamb, the eagle and the dove; ſhe muſt not, ſhe cannot be his. Were you to ſee, Mrs. Jenkins, her beautiful face, when ſhe ſpeaks to me, calls me her own Wilmot, and aſks me, ſo unconſcious is ſhe of her attractions, if I will always love her; if you was but to ſee her, you would both pity and ſerve me."

"If you go to London," ſaid Hannah, "I ſuppoſe you will call upon Captain and Mrs. Overbury; and pray be ſo good if you do, as to preſent my humble love and duty to them, and tell them my heart is the ſame towards them as ever; and that for their ſakes I hate this old Miſs, even to a wicked degree of hatred; though for the ſake of ſeeing their dear child, I bend my ſpirit ſo low as to hide from her knowledge, and forbear giving her her own."

Wilmot felt himſelf much relieved by this ſtep, and was returning home, under the park-wall, in deep meditation, when who ſhould ride by him but Elliſon, attended only by one ſervant, who condeſcendingly ſtopped his horſe to ſpeak to him.

"Good bye, Wilmot," ſaid he, "another Bath excurſion; and very apropos too, before you leave the country; for you will have Elfrida to yourſelf, and may ſay what you pleaſe to her; but take care, however,

I don't

I don't ſurprize you together again, leſt I ſhould play you a ſecond unlucky trick;" ſaying which, he once more nodded his head, with good bye, and laughing rode off.

Wilmot only bowed and endeavored to ſmile.

"Happy Elliſon," ſaid Wilmot, looking after him, and ſetting himſelf upon a gate that looked into Miſs Cluwyd's park; happy, happy Elliſon, how much have you the advantage of me, in every reſpect, in fortune, in an exemption from my ſoftneſs of temper, in ſelf-love; happy Elliſon, how I envy you;" but turning his head, and perceiving Elfrida running towards him, "but I envy you not, for upon one ground I am your ſuperior, Elfrida's innocent affections are all my own."

Elfrida told him that Elliſon had been to take a formal leave of her, though for ſo ſhort an abſence as a week, and amongſt many other ill-natured and incomprehenſible things, had aſſured her, ſhe would be obſerved, when ſhe leaſt ſuſpected it, by one that would inform him of all that paſſed, and that therefore ſhe would do well not to expoſe herſelf, by running about Arcadia with her favorite, "but his worthy ſpy cannot yet be come upon duty; and ſo, Wilmot, we ſhall have a few happy moments in ſpite of him."

Wilmot,

Wilmot, from ſtern neceſſity, rejoiced ſhe had received this, however imperious, caution from Elliſon, for he could not contrive to point out to her the danger of her tender behavior towards him, leſt he ſhould ſhock, as well as ſurprize her; but when ſhe communicated Elliſon's malice and ill nature, as it appeared to her, for ſhe had not a ſingle idea beyond, he gently acknowledged, that according to the cuſtoms of the world, Elliſon had been generous, to put her upon her guard, for that the world's opinion, and purity of conduct were widely different things; and, terrified to indulge himſelf in this kind of private conference, he entered the park, and ſaid, "I will walk with you, if you pleaſe, acroſs the lawn; but tell me, Miſs Ella, what happy accident brought you to this ſpot?"

"Neither more nor leſs," ſaid ſhe," than the accident of ſeeing you from the drawing-room window; but I ſuppoſe I have done wrong in coming to you; I cannot, however, Wilmot, put on all my fetters at once; my looks, my words, my actions to be fettered, it is too much; and ah! how needleſs, to oblige me to conceal what paſſes in my poor heart; for it is right in its feelings, wrong as the bad world is in its cuſtoms, thus to change the nature and meaning of things; it is, indeed, a terrible world

world, Wilmot, if Elliſon, not yourſelf, is the likeneſs of it."

Hannah, at Elfrida's requeſt, wrote a long letter to Mrs. Overbury, with the delivery of which Wilmot was charged, full of his praiſes, and of Elfrida's affection for him, for ſo artleſs and upright was her temper, that except to Miſs Cluwyd and Elliſon, ſhe had no notion of diſguiſe; this ſhe gave him at their next little interview.

"I would aſk you to write to me, Edmund," ſaid ſhe, "but I ſuppoſe you would refuſe me, becauſe letters ought not to be conveyed privately; this, however, I can underſtand; for if my father and mother had not thought it an ill thing, for letters to be privately ſent and received, they would never have denied me the ſatisfaction of hearing from them."

"However, Wilmot," continued ſhe, "we will do what all the world, and all the world's arts cannot prevent our doing; we will think of each other, at times when we know we are the object of each other's thoughts; what do you ſay to this propoſal? will it not be agreeable?"

"Ah, Miſs Ella," ſaid Wilmot, "can you make a doubt of it?"

"Then I am happy at laſt," ſaid ſhe, "to have hit upon what you cannot diſapprove, to keep me in your remembrance; and, you know my dreſſing hour, then my ſoul has a little

little breathing-time, and I will think over all your care of me, and all your kindneſs; and do you, Edmund, recollect the tender gratitude I bear you, and thus the poor Ella will never ſlip out of your memory; and you ſhall ſee how I will try to be improved in knowledge and proper behavior, before we meet again; and ſince Maſter Elliſon will have us watched, let us be watched to ſome purpoſe, and walk a little every morning here juſt under the parlor-window, in the view of every body; and let his ſpy make his worſt of it. Will you, Wilmot?

"There never, never was ſuch a girl upon earth," ſaid Wilmot; as he returned home; not upon the whole earth, is there ſo enchanting a creature; how lovely is uncorrupted nature; how beautiful undeſigning innocence; how dangerouſly beautiful is my Elfrida, for her winning artleſſneſs will deſtroy my peace of mind for ever."

"I have been thinking," ſaid ſhe, "Wilmot," the next morning, in their little walk, (as ſhe had propoſed) under the parlor-window, "that we had better take leave before Elliſon returns; it is but avoiding each other a day or two ſooner than our inevitable ſeparation demands; you muſt, however, conſent to walk with me at our laſt meeting, to the corner of the ſhrubbery, for I cannot let you go without a token, not of remembrance, I will not ſuppoſe it neceſſary, but

of

of preference in eſteem and affection; for never will I love any one half ſo well as I do you; you know my father and mother, Edmund, are always excepted."

Elfrida was amazingly expert at her pencil, and finding, by a few accidental words, that Elliſon's buſineſs at Bath, was to get himſelf drawn for a bracelet, which ſhe had every reaſon to dread was intended to ornament her arm, ſhe was determined Wilmot ſhould receive a preſent from her, that inſtead of a mortification, would, ſhe was aſſured, be dear to him; for next to the diſtreſs of carrying about the likeneſs of a diſagreeable object, muſt be, ſhe conceived, the delight of evermore beholding a beloved one.

She therefore ſet to work, and there being a ſmall portrait of herſelf in Miſs Cluwyd's dreſſing-room, ſhe conveyed it, with all poſſible privacy, to her own apartment, and taking it out of the frame, for expedition-ſake, traced out her features upon a fine, delicate paper, which, when held to the light, was tranſparent, and then colored it by the miniature, replacing it as ſoon as ſhe could ſpare it.

Having ſucceeded very well, for a firſt eſſay, ſhe put it upon canvaſs, by way of preſervation, and wrote in a little oval frame, drawn round it for the purpoſe of containing a motto, " the gift of Ella Overbury, to her own

own Wilmot, whom ſhe will love ever," encloſing it in a caſe ſhe had by her.

This ſhe preſented him, at their parting interview. "Apply to your ſtudies," ſaid ſhe, "for all I have to aſk of you muſt be ſpoke in few words; ſee my dear father and mother, win their good opinion, and return, whenever you are permitted to return, the good boy I loſe, and Ella Overbury will have nothing more to wiſh for."

Wilmot having fortified himſelf with reflections, that every ſucceeding day would render their interviews more and more critical, took leave of her with chearfulneſs, promiſing to bring her a whole pocket-full of London trinkets, whenever he had the happineſs to be reſtored to her.

"Shake hands," ſaid ſhe, "Wilmot, do people that love part thus? but farewell, (tears ſtarting to her eyes) farewell, my dear boy, it will not be for ever."

The ſecond day after Elliſon returned, and Wilmot, having kiſſed the picture a thouſand times, which his Ella had told him was not only her likeneſs, but the work of her own hands, he bid adieu to the ſpot of his nativity, the ſcene of his infant pleaſures, the dwelling-place of his Elfrida, all, all adieu; he, nevertheleſs, congratulated himſelf, that things had terminated ſo happily, and that no ſuſpicious doors would be ſhut againſt him at his return.

AN

AN ALARM.

What a taſk had the poor Elfrida now to perform, ſhe muſt dreſs to pleaſe the people of Arcadia, and eat as uſual, though Wilmot was gone; and be attended every where by Elliſon, who, conſcious of his ſituation with Miſs Cluwyd, would ſometimes ſtartle her by his attentions, and wound her by his expreſſions; and her heart muſt have ſunk under its intolerable weight, but for Hannah Jenkins, to whoſe lodge ſhe was allowed to go as often as ſhe pleaſed; but that ſhe might not be too happy, from this indulgence, Elliſon took care, almoſt continually, to follow her.

Elliſon was now in his eighteenth year, and Elfrida in her fifteenth, for many months had elapſed ſince Wilmot's departure, without any talk or proſpect of his return; Hannah and he, indeed, interchanged ſeveral letters, but he had not ſeen Captain and Mrs. Overbury, which grieved the good woman much, though he informed her they were not in London, nor even expected there for ſome time; when her mind was effectually called off from theſe ſmaller anxieties, by Elfrida's being taken ſuddenly ill, with all the ſymptoms, the phyſician declared, of the ſmall-pox.

Miſs

Miſs Cluwyd, and all the Elliſon family, had never had it; and were enemies to innoculation, becauſe not practiſed by the *ancients*; away they all hurried therefore to Bath, leaving the lovely girl to the care of Mrs. Jenkins, Mrs. Wilmot, and the doctors.

"Tell me," ſaid Elfrida, as ſoon as they were gone, "for I may now aſk what queſtions I like? What, Sir, is my diſorder?"

The phyſician was ſilent.

"I hope it is the ſmall-pox," ſaid ſhe, "and that I ſhall have it heavily; for I want to be ugly, very ugly, Sir, if heaven will give me leave."

"Dear young lady," ſaid the phyſician, "I hope heaven will ſpare your face; though no loſs could make you ugly; your good ſenſe and good nature will laſt for ever; compoſe yourſelf, therefore, Miſs Elfrida, you have got the ſmall-pox, but you will ſtill be handſome."

"Mrs. Jenkins," ſaid Elfrida, "you heard what has paſt; it is that diſmal diſtemper, and I hope it will not ſpare me; if I was once very ugly, Elliſon would diſlike me, and I ſhould be ſent back to my father and mother, and Wilmot would not love me the worſe, let what would happen to my face."

Her

Her fever ran high, though the eruption was light, and ſhe had frequent wanderings; her father, mother and Wilmot, ſhe inſiſted upon it, were come to ſee her; nay, one night, ſhe poſitively and calmly affirmed, ſhe had ſeen Elliſon.

Hannah, whoſe head was full of ghoſts and goblins, cried, "Lord forbid, for it muſt be his apparition, for I myſelf ſaw him ſet off for Bath, with the reſt of the runaways from heaven, and a dear child, that every one would wiſh to watch over."

At the end of a few days Elfrida was able to ſit up; and found, after the ninth, that all was over, and her expectations totally diſappointed, for her face, except a little redneſs in the forehead, had undergone no alteration.

Hannah wrote all theſe particulars to Wilmot, with a whole ſtring of enquiries about Captain and Mrs. Overbury, hoping he had at length ſeen them, and found them as well as ſhe could wiſh, or more properly ſhe ſaid, "could be thought of in the *abſtence* of their dear child."

The truth was that Wilmot, on calling at Captain Overbury's lodging, had the mortification to hear that both he and his wife were gone into Warwickſhire, where they propoſed paſſing ſome time, and that their return was very uncertain.

However,

However, as he repeated his enquiry after them, on every opportunity, he found they were arrived in town, the week which preceded the date of Mrs. Jenkins' letter, when he executed all his commiſſions to the beſt of his abilities.

But inſtead of meeting with the reception he had hoped for, the Captain was apparently much diſordered by the contents of the little packet he had brought him; and totally diſcouraged an acquaintance with him, leſt Miſs Cluwyd ſhould be offended; but Mrs. Overbury thanked him, with tears in her eyes, for what he had done for her child, and told him ſhe would pray for him.

Notwithſtanding this freezing behavior, he ventured to call once more before he returned to his uncle; when Mr. Overbury appeared thoughtful the whole time he ſtayed, ſeemed to make a point of not leaving him alone with the gentle Mrs. Overbury; and, on his retiring, never once aſked him to renew his viſit; the altogether of which ſo mortified him, that he ſtill led Hannah, in his anſwer, to ſuppoſe they were not yet come to town, though he did not write it in direct terms.

The fact was, that the Lieutenant was ſtartled by all he ſaw and heard reſpecting Wilmot, his handſome perſon, his winning addreſs, the praiſes of him from Hannah's

pen, and the warmth with which he mentioned Elfrida, awakened fears in his breaſt, which a knowledge of human nature, his own experience, and the probable chances of life, juſtified.

Miſs Cluwyd's idea of mixing girls and boys together, was highly diſapproved by him; for it was often in infancy, he was well aſſured, that the heart was led captive, or at leaſt in early youth, as was the ſituation of the parties in queſtion; and as no friendſhip could be more lively than that formed between his daughter and Wilmot, there was every reaſon to apprehend it would be permanent; he durſt not, however, communicate his fears, even to his wife, as a ſingleword upon the ſubject, like a ſpark ſtruck from the flint, might give birth to the very evil he dreaded, which was at worſt, under its preſent predicament, an unborn misfortune.

Wilmot thanked Hannah, in the ſtrongeſt terms, for not acquainting him with Elfrida's illneſs, until it was over, as he feared he ſhould have been guilty of ſome extravagant act; ſince he found great difficulty in reſtraining himſelf, now he heard ſhe was recovered, from coming down to have one look at her, to ſatisfy himſelf of the truth of her report.

But there was a conſideration that bound him more powerfully than chains of adamant,

mant, and that was, leſt the ſweet girl ſhould be blamed for his wild conduct, on a ſuppoſition of approving it; and in effect, from that approbation cauſing it; for whoſe ſake he was determined to move, upon whatever occaſion, within the line of reſolution and propriety.

The very enſuing evening to Elfrida's being announced able to break through her confinement, Hannah was ſent for to ſpeak to a perſon, the ſervant told her, who had particular buſineſs with her; when to her equal terror and aſtoniſhment, who ſhould ſhe behold but young Elliſon, having eloped, as he acquainted his father, mother, and Miſs Cluwyd, by letter, to live or die with Elfrida; and the origin of this lover-like piece of gallantry, as Elliſon deemed it, was as follows:

In his Bath excurſion, being left entirely to his own diſcretion, or what was, perhaps, ſtill worſe, the diſcretion of a favorite ſervant, in the choice of his amuſements, he fixed upon novel-reading, which opening a kind of new world upon his knowledge, he purſued with ſuch avidity, that he ſat up half the night, indulging his new-born taſte in literature, which the accidental meeting with a novel, in the parlor-window of the boarding-houſe where he was ſituated, had given birth to.

Every ſoft, and every tender adventure upon the librarian's liſt was peruſed by him, and amongſt the reſt Rouſſeau's Eloiſa ſtood high in his good-liking. When, therefore, Elfrida became ill, and her diſorder was ſaid to be the ſmall-pox, he took it in his head, after the example of that fair one's lover, who obtained a ſight of his miſtreſs in the height of the diſtemper, and by kiſſing her hand, contrived to imbibe the infection, to drop his friends upon the Bath-road and return to the Grange, whence he had come daily to Arcadia, and by dint of intreaty and intereſt had ſeen Elfrida there, when ſhe was aſleep; and had actually been ſeen by her, in one of his viſits, on her awaking ſomewhat ſuddenly, juſt as he was withdrawing.

This ſtroke of romance pleaſed his relations, and his great friend, Miſs Cluwyd, to the higheſt degree; but had a very different complexion in Hannah's opinion; who ſhewing fearful tokens of ſurprize on encountering him, he aſked her in a quiet and triumphant manner, "who now, Mrs. Jenkins, loves Elfrida the beſt, the boy, that in honor could do no leſs than ſhare her fate upon the water; or he, who never having had a dangerous diſeaſe, regardleſs of his own ſafety, would not leave the ſpot of her reſidence?"

But

But before we proceed further with our hiſtory, we muſt remark, in favor of novel-reading, that it is like all other modes of amuſement, capable of *uſe* and *abuſe*, according to the prevailing temper of the individual; for that in its worſt effects, it is the natural inclination which is either awakened or ſtrengthened by it, not new principles infuſed; for the ruling paſſion gives the color to the mind, when, as the poet expreſſes it:

Whatever warms the heart or fills the head,
As the mind opens and its functions ſpread,
Imagination plies its dangerous art,
And pours it all upon the peccant part;
Nature *its* mother, habit *is its* nurſe,
Wit, genius, faculties, but make it worſe.

Hence the enterprizing, the vain, the licentious, and the tender, ſeparate and aſſimilate whatever moſt pleaſingly ſtrikes them, and are Lovelaces, Pollexfens, Floyers, wild, iniquitous, and furious characters, not becauſe the author has drawn ſuch, but becauſe the outline is within their own breaſt; whilſt the generous, the humane and the worthy, are Grandiſons, Delvilles, Faulconers, &c. &c. from their ſecret and characteriſtic propenſities.

On this account we ſhould be careful, above all others, of the reading part of education, in order to form the taſte, correct the wrong bias, and eſtabliſh the morals, by

the force of good example, the inculcation of good principles, and the active ſpirit of adoption in young minds; inſtead of putting a ſword into a madman's hands, feeding a fever, and enlarging the powers of the miſchievous; and as through life, from the ductility of the ſoul, and the ſtrong fetter of habit, we find people in their language, their manners, their addreſs, the near reſemblance of their connexions, ſo in a moſt particular meaſure are we bent and modelled by our favorite authors, whoſe ſentiments, ideas, rule of judgment, and of conduct, from being *ſuggeſted*, not *impoſed*, ſteal upon our hearts with all the danger of gentle inſinuation, and prove either the ſlow poiſon of our latent virtues, or the extinguiſhers of our prompt vices; being always in extremes, whether it has a fatal or a ſalutary operation. But to return to the afflicted Hannah.

Elliſon proceeded to inform Hannah of his manœuvres, and that he had beheld her fair patient, and once, he ſuſpected, was beheld by her, when her watchfulneſs was buried in ſleep; "but ſhe is now," continued he, "I am aſſured, well enough to bear company; I therefore entreat, Mrs. Jenkins, you will obtain the favor for me of drinking tea with her."

"Bleſs us all," ſaid Hannah, "it will ſo hurry her to hear you are in the houſe—I wiſh

wiſh I had never ſeen you; you are much to blame, Sir, and what can I do in the affair?

"Why, Mrs. Jenkins," returned he, "in his uſual haughty accent, "if you will not introduce me, I muſt introduce myſelf, that is the whole queſtion between us."

"O let me prepare her," cried Hannah, "you will kill her if ſhe is not prepared; not but the ſurprize will be too much for her, ſoften it however we may."

Elfrida was ſhocked as well as mortified, when ſhe heard what he had done and what he requeſted; "Now ſhall I be charged with obligation upon his account; but it is to pleaſe himſelf alone he is come; had he wiſhed to pleaſe me he would have acted quite otherwiſe; but we muſt receive him, Hannah."

Elliſon, when he appeared before Elfrida, had an air of tender concern in his countenance, which was quite new to it; he addreſſed her with affection; ſaid and did every agreeable thing, aſked her to admit his viſits, only as he proved himſelf worthy that indulgence, and begged her pardon for every time he had tormented her.

Elfrida's good-nature was touched. "What will this end in, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "if you take the diſtemper I ſhall be miſerable; you may do yourſelf harm and can do me no good. Why, O why were you ſo imprudent?"

"I could tell you why, Miſs Elfrida," ſaid Elliſon "and teach you to account for my conduct; but that I muſt mention a certain name, and certain circumſtances, which would make you call me ill-natured; is it, however, ſtrange, in your opinion, that we ſhould be anxious to behold thoſe we love? to wiſh to be near them? Ah! how well thoſe that ever felt the paſſion underſtand all this, and would know how to excuſe what I have done!"

"I lament, Sir," ſaid Elfrida, "I do not take upon me to chide you; it is, nevertheleſs, I muſt ſay, unkind of you to run yourſelf into danger, needleſs danger, Mr. Elliſon, upon my account, and for which it muſt be impoſſible I ſhould ever thank you."

"Elfrida, Elfrida," ſaid he, his color riſing and ſhaking his head.

"I wiſh not to offend you," ſaid ſhe, "but our health, our lives, are much too precious things to be ſported with; they ought not, Sir, to be complimented away; and, as far as my concern in this matter, your ſtaying here was a mere compliment."

"I am ſorry to alarm you," ſaid Elliſon, changing countenance, "and fear you will never forgive me; but I am much indiſpoſed, even at this moment indiſpoſed. What will you ſay, Elfrida, to a requeſt I have to make?

make? Can you conſent to let me remain in this houſe, as my relations are abſent? prevail upon Mrs. Jenkins to nurſe me; ſome times look in upon me yourſelf, if you can, and ſhould I happen to die, I will die bleſſing your goodneſs."

"You fright me," ſaid Elfrida, "but I hope without a cauſe. In Miſs Cluwyd's houſe, I am certain, you may command accommodation, under ſuch circumſtances as being ill, and at a diſtance from Mr. and Mrs. Elliſon; nor, under ſuch circumſtances will Mrs. Jenkins, I dare believe, refuſe to attend you; but what will become of us?"

He apparently grew worſe, and a bed was prepared for him upon the ſame floor with Elfrida, for Mrs. Jenkins' convenience, in dividing her care between her two patients; but though ſhe rejoiced beyond meaſure in the recovery of the one, ſhe ſecretly wiſhed the other to be taken away from a world in which he ſeemed to have no pleaſure but what conſiſted in tormenting his fellow-creatures; and ſhe thought ſhe ſhould atone for this ſin of the heart, by doing a kind and juſt part by him as a nurſe, &c. &c.

AN AMOUR.

But though Mrs. Elliſon fled from Arcadia, ſhe could not fly from the apprehended diſeaſe; ſhe was taken ill a few hours after her arrival at Bath, and expired the eleventh day.

Miſs Cluwyd and Mr. Elliſon eſcaped, and a kind of common diſtreſs throwing them often together, they became firſt condolers, next conſolers, and at length the neceſſary ſupporters of each other.

Miſs Cluwyd extolled the boy's ſpirit, in not forſaking Elfrida, as ſhe called it, to the ſkies, declaring that one act, if he had no other merits, entitled him to her hand; but the truth was, ſhe ſaid, that as well in mind as perſon, he was all his father.

Mr. Elliſon could do no leſs than make a gallant return to this flaming compliment, and ſoon by a very ſuitable flouriſh, reduced Venus, herſelf, into nothing better than a train bearer to Elfrida, hinting at the ſame time, what a *family likeneſs* there was between her and her rich relation; the ſee-ſaw was pretty, and well kept up; but as we imagine the above ſpecimen will be ſufficient, for the entertainment of our readers, we ſhall proceed with our hiſtory.

Mrs

Mrs. Wilmot, at Elfrida's requeſt, came to reſide at Arcadia, until Elliſon's recovery, who was much pitted, for he had a virulent ſort; but he bore his illneſs with a patience and reſignation of which no one ſuſpected him capable, and which was pronounced by Miſs Cluwyd an undeniable proof of the force of his paſſion, for it was for Elfrida he had ſuffered, and even Elfrida, herſelf, muſt own he ſuffered nobly.

When the time arrived that Miſs Cluwyd beheld herſelf reſtored to Arcadia, and began to perceive how ſmart a widower her neighbor Elliſon was, and to weigh his large eſtate in her mind, it appeared to her much the wiſer ſcheme, inſtead of waiting for Mrs. Overbury's deceaſe, and the precarious chance of winning the Lieutenant's heart, to ſet her cap at Mr. Elliſon, and in due time make a double match of it, when the young ones would inherit a ſplendid fortune.

Her mind had, however, many miſgivings; Lieut. Overbury was ſo handſome, but that was in his youth, and ſo pleaſing in his converſation, but that was before he became a huſband, for poverty, diſappointment, and matrimony, had greatly altered him; and ſo bewitched was he, that ſhe did not believe he would thank her for her wealth himſelf, though he was ſo far rational,

tional, as to wiſh his child might poſſeſs it.

Mr. Elliſon accompanied his ſon often to Arcadia; and once, on conducting Miſs Cluwyd to her carriage, preſſed her hand with ardor, this was proof poſitive of his tender intentions; he had, moreover, ſaid civil things to her, beyond every thing ſhe had known even *him* capable of, in the civil way; and ſhe at laſt ceaſed to doubt of his making her an offer of his heart and fortune, as ſoon as he could do it with propriety.

Nor was ſhe miſtaken, for within the ſucceeding ſix months to his wife's deceaſe, he made a tender of himſelf in form, and was in form accepted, to the unſpeakable affliction of Elfrida, who was ordered, upon this event, to call young Elliſon couſin, and to live under the ſame roof with him, which to her feelings was a ſevere calamity.

Wilmot, who could not reſt without being upon better terms with Captain Overbury, reſolved to make him another viſit, and, cruel as he was, congratulate him upon his Elfrida's recovery; but, arrived in London, it occurred to him to call when he knew the gentleman was from home; when, as he flattered himſelf, he met with a moſt kind reception from Mrs. Overbury.

This

This affectionate mother was delighted to hear every particular of her child, wept at the account of her danger, was enraptured at her deliverance, and affectionately embraced the author of it. I know not, ſaid ſhe, Mr. Overbury's reaſons, but he will not permit me to mention you; it is the firſt inſtance of my life I ever rebelled againſt him; but my doors and my arms ſhall always be open to the friend of my deareſt Ella; and may you, young gentleman, be as happy as your merit evidently entitles you to be.

Wilmot's heart danced with joy at this unhoped for kindneſs; he told Mrs. Overbury he had written to his father for leave to make him a viſit, and would bear her tender remembrance to her Ella.

"Tell her," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "that I aſk of heaven only to behold her once again, and then to cloſe my eyes for ever; ſevere," added ſhe, "has been my taſk of ſelf-denial, but my huſband made it his requeſt, and to gratify him I gave up my heart-felt felicity."

She then, weeping, told him all the little endearments of her Ella's infancy, their parting, and in ſhort ſoftened the boy to ſuch exceſs, that he could not help betraying the preſent ſhe had made him.

Mrs. Overbury kiſſed the dear reſemblance, which was a thouſand times more valuable

valuable to her, for being the production of her Ella's pencil, than if it had been the performance of a firſt-rate maſter; and ſhe hinted how happy ſhe ſhould be to call it hers.

"I will entruſt you with the poſſeſſion of it, Madam," ſaid he, "to make you happy; ſo dear do I hold the happineſs of Miſs Ella Overbury's moſt beloved mother, provided you will promiſe to reſtore it me, whenever the original is again your own."

She promiſed to conſider it as the depoſit of friendſhip, and friendly confidence, to conceal it from her huſband, and to remember the kindneſs with gratitude.

Wilmot received juſt the anſwer he wiſhed for from his father, and ſet off for Arcadia; but how changed the ſcene! Elfrida was ſtarted up into an appearance of womanhood that awed him, and Elliſon wore all the marks of a favored lover, nor did there ſeem to be a ray of hope of his ever ſpeaking to her in private; moreover, Hannah affirmed that the marriage of Elliſon and Elfrida was become the general talk of the county, and that ſhe herſelf was the only perſon ignorant of it, but that it would, nevertheleſs, moſt infallibly, be a match.

Wilmot, ſo misjudging is youth, and ſuch a ſuicide is love, retraced all the ſcenes of his former delight; and thoſe only who poſſeſs ſimilar ſenſibility, and have experienced

enced a ſimilar ſituation, can conceive his alternate ſenſations of pleaſure and pain.

He now, however, no longer attempted to impoſe upon himſelf, but freely confeſſed that his friendſhip for Elfrida was converted into the tendereſt, as well as moſt hopeleſs of paſſions; and that death alone could extinguiſh it.

He bid Hannah tell Miſs Overbury, for he did not preſume to call her Elfrida, what a happy commiſſion he was charged with from her mother.

Elfrida vibrated from head to foot on this information, "the maternal bleſſing!" cried ſhe, "ſacred ſound and ſacred commiſſion! I will defy the utmoſt malice of ill-natured obſervations, Mrs. Jenkins, to receive it at his hands; early to-morrow-morning you you ſhall ſee me at the lodge."

She kept her appointment, but what was her ſorrow and ſurprize to find ſuch an altered Wilmot? "Do we meet again," ſaid ſhe, "and have you converſed with my dear, dear mother?"

"I have Madam," ſaid Wilmot, "and ſhall have that pleaſure at my return."

"Madam! your Ella, Madam! can this," ſaid Elfrida, "be poſſible? am I not the little girl you doated upon, that was your delight, that you uſed to fly to meet, and part from with reluctance?

"Days

"Days of innocence and peace, ſaid Wilmot, "never more to return. I muſt not approach you as formerly; you are now Miſs Overbury, and the poor Wilmot dare not look up to you."

"*Miſs* Overbury!" repeated Elfrida, "cruel Wilmot, what dæmon of formality and diſcontent has taken poſſeſſion of your mind? in what am I altered, except in my reſidence? Miſs Cluwyd is now Mrs. Elliſon; one family has, therefore, joined two perſons, under the ſame roof, that are as oppoſite as the elements. You know, Wilmot, how far aſunder our ſentiments, taſtes, and tempers, are from each other."

"I cannot recover myſelf," ſaid Wilmot, "and I wiſh I had never returned; I wonder not at Elliſon's attachment, I only lament my own diſqualifications. Parſon Wilmot's ſon has only to deſpair and die."

"Hear me, Wilmot," ſaid Elfrida, "I begin to underſtand you; modeſty and openneſs of diſpoſition ſhall go hand-in-hand. I have ever loved you, and will ever love you, nor can the opinion of the whole world weaken an impreſſion received in infancy, and ſtrengthened by ſingular acts of friendſhip; appearances, you know, muſt be attended to; I feel them, and I will not heſitate to call them ſo many fetters, and as ſuch I am bound by them, but my mind is free, exteriors cannot affect that, and while I have

I have conſciouſneſs it will be all your own."

"Something," ſaid Wilmot, "of fatal foreboding hangs upon my ſpirits. O Miſs Ella for the laſt time, I fear, we converſe with each other. Your father will command you to give me up; you muſt, you will be Elliſon's."

"How," ſaid Elfrida, "will the beſt of men promote a violation of truth and of honor; to accept Elliſon for a huſband, I muſt have a new ſoul, the one I now poſſeſs, refuſes all connexion with him; as the ſon-in-law of my mother's relation I tolerate him; ſhould more be aſked of me, I muſt aſſert my right; and the liberty of refuſal, though not perhaps of choice, is mine, and I will never conſent to marry the man who is not my Wilmot's friend."

This was comfort Wilmot's heart could not receive, though Elfrida conceived ſhe had ſet it finally at reſt by this declaration. He looked the deepeſt diſtreſs.

"What have I ſaid, Wilmot," demanded Elfrida, "my heart is all kindneſs towards you; can it then be poſſible my words ſhould wound? I would this moment, Heaven is my witneſs, reſume my infancy, as its brighteſt gift, and be your little companion; for your converſation, and my father and mother's affection, is all I can form an idea of, or ſhall ever aſk of happineſs; and

now be yourſelf, Wilmot, and tell me all about my dear mother."

Hannah abruptly preſented herſelf, "Alas! my dear young lady," ſaid ſhe, "you muſt pardon me, for we ſhould loſe our bread, and good bread the ſaving of you has been to us, without doing you any ſervice, if Mr. Wilmot and you were to meet here."

Elfrida was ſhocked. "Meet," repeated ſhe, "Wilmot and I meet; theſe are ſtrange words, Hannah; a new fetter for us, Wilmot; and we muſt ſubmit to it; is this the pleaſure I promiſed myſelf in your return? this! but I have done. Well-meaning Mrs. Jenkins, I thank you for your hint; it is not right for girls to meet their deareſt friends clandeſtinely; my father and my mother would not meet thus; therefore, Wilmot, you and I muſt follow their example; and, until the world is more liberal, only ſee each other in mixed company. O my beſt friend, my worthy youth, farewell."

Elfrida left them, and Wilmot ſtood motionleſs. "Cruel Mrs. Jenkins," ſaid he, "what an alarm have you given Miſs Overbury's ſenſibility. I ſhall never ſee her more, and you are the cauſe of it; but I will ſhorten my viſit at Arcadia. I cannot, cannot bear my preſent ſituation."

On his return to his father's houſe, he found an invitation for himſelf, the Rector and

and his wife, to dine at the hall, and having no decent excuſe, he was obliged to attend them.

Mrs. Elliſon received him with great kindneſs, commended his perſon, adviſed him to take orders, and promiſed him the Rectory his father enjoyed, which was in her gift, if he ſurvived him.

Wilmot politely thanked her, but told her the church was not the profeſſion he wiſhed to engage in.

"I ſhould think," ſaid Elliſon, impertinently, "it was, of all others, the beſt adapted to your meek, and gentle nature, and I own to you I ſhould have much pleaſure in hearing you preach, more eſpecially if Miſs Elfrida would condeſcend to chooſe texts for you. Pride, cruelty, and ingratitude, are, Mr. Wilmot, terrible vices, every one of which has been imputed to your humble ſervant, by a fair accuſer (looking at Elfrida) but they were ſo many evil ſpirits, which the ſweetneſs of her manners has long ſince caſt out of my heart. I ſhould, nevertheleſs, delight to hear what her friend could make of the ſubject, little danger as their is of their ever returning to unfit me for her heavenly converſe and company."

Elfrida recollected the incident that gave riſe to this piece of malice, and was ſorry to find he had not forgot it.

Wilmot,

Wilmot, with great addreſs, and without ſeeming to feel Elliſon's ſatire, gave a new turn to their ideas, by aſking Mrs. Elliſon if ſhe had read the Sorrows of Werter.

She had read it, and was at a loſs, ſhe ſaid, to determine, whether the good ſenſe or the folly of the hero, was moſt ſtriking.

"There is a paſſage," ſaid Wilmot, "which, though it aggravates Werter's crime, deſerves the higheſt approbation of the reader; it is, Madam, what he ſays upon good-humor, the duties, the efficacies and the delights of which, he paints in beautiful colorings, and ſtrongly marks the contraſt.

"I recollect the paſſage and admire it," ſaid Mrs. Elliſon, flattered by the youth's particular appeal to her.

"And yet," ſaid Wilmot, "ſuch oppoſites has the author of Werter thought proper to render the ſentiments and conduct of his hero, that the man who can moſt humanely pronounce it a crime to wound the peace of his friend, interrupt his pleaſures, or rob him of but a ſingle enjoyment, by an act of gloomy and cruel deliberation, with the perfect knowledge before his eyes of all its melancholy conſequences, can fix upon the very period of promiſed delight, to a worthy and amiable family, to diſappoint the children he profeſſes to love, plunge the woman of his tendereſt attachment into horror,

ror, and wring the hearts of all that are dear to him, by cutting off his exiſtence with his own hands; and for what? becauſe the laws of God and man did not permit him to carry off the deſtined wife of another; for Charlotte was engaged to Albert before he ever beheld her face; and this, at a time when he was honored with the friendſhip of all parties, and every indulgence a man of principle could aſk, or a woman of delicacy beſtow."

"Very true," ſaid Mrs. Elliſon, "it is a horrid cataſtrophe, and yet it reads ſo prettily one knows not how to reſiſt it; but I confeſs to you it will never teach me the leſſon of ſuicide."

"Nor me," ſaid Wilmot," "ſo far from it, that the work has quite a different effect upon my mind, to what is ſuppoſed to be its dangerous tendency; for inſtead of ſeducing me into the crime which Werter commits, it fortifies my ſoul againſt it, by ſhewing me either the inſanity or the barbarity of the individual, who, rather than bear his own diſcontents, regulate his feelings, and live to every ſocial, moral and divine command, would ruſh into eternity, forſake and deſtroy all thoſe whoſe happineſs he could have promoted, and which ought to have been dear to him."

"A lover," ſaid Elliſon, "a diſappointed lover,

lover, Mr. Wilmot, can there be a more trying ſituation upon earth?"

"Yes, Sir," replied Wilmot, "the diſtreſs of his beloved; nor is there a boſom that ever felt the paſſion, the true, the genuine ſentiment of tender attachment, which would not exult in its torments, to preſerve the heart of the adored object unwounded."

"Generous Wilmot," ſaid Elfrida.

"Enthuſiaſtic," ſaid Elliſon, "the mere heroics of amorous lunacy; but, Miſs Overbury, you ſeem to forget what time has done by us all; we are no longer the boys, or you the little girl of Arcadia, and *tempora mutantur*, he cannot be your *own* Wilmot, as heretofore."

Wilmot only ſmiled, but Elfrida ſmarted under this ill-natured obſervation, which ſhe knew was intended to mortify, and throw her worthy friend to a diſtance.

"What a wrong method," ſaid ſhe to Hannah, "he takes, if he wiſhes to detach my heart from Wilmot, giving him ſuch repeated opportunities of ſhining at his expence; the one all benevolence, the other all ſarcaſm; the one ſeeking to oblige every body, the other regardleſs of whom he may offend; the one never ſpeaking but to pleaſe, the other deſirous only to pain. Bleſſed Wilmot! Their diſpoſitions, Mrs. Jenkins, will reward and puniſh

puniſh them through life. But the great misfortune in Elliſon's caſe is, that ſome innocent and deſerving perſon will, perhaps, be condemned to ſuffer with him; how tenderly ſhould I pity the woman, I had reaſon to think was born to become his wife?"

A RECONCILIATION.

But to return to Captain Overbury. The figure, the friendſhip, the altogether of Wilmot, occaſioned ſuch confuſion in his breaſt, that he knew not how to ſupport it.

His merit was ſo ſtriking, the long intimacy between him and Elfrida ſo alarming, that he trembled for the conſequences. Night and day his image tormented his imagination; awake he dreaded him as the grand enemy of his peace, and in his dreams he ſeemed to aſk of him, wherefore he was againſt him? for that if nature had made his child lovely, and given him eyes to ſee and a heart to feel it, was he to blame for following her dictates? Agitated with theſe ideas, he happened to come home one evening, a little unexpectedly upon his wife, and found her (O treaſonable act!) weeping over the miniature of Elfrida.

"What is it you are concealing, my dear?" ſaid he, a picture of your child!

Why

"Why am I denied? Ah! what do I behold!" cried he, the motto having met his eye, "a confirmation of all my ſuſpicions. The gift of Ella Overbury to her own Wilmot. This boy will be the bane of all our hopes. When, where did you ſee him? Have I lived to be deceived by the woman I believed open as day, and the beſt friend of my life?"

Mrs. Overbury was ſhocked by theſe words, and candidly related all that paſſed. "He is now at Arcadia," ſaid ſhe, "and will ſee us at his return; he has a worthy mind, and we owe him even our Ella's life."

"Theſe ties," ſaid Mr. Overbury, "are, of all others, the moſt dangerous to young people. The affections, I believe you yourſelf have experienced, are often tenderly engaged under the name of gratitude. Wilmot, with all his merit, is a moſt unfit huſband for our child; and though it has ſo happened, that you and I have continued to love each other through every trying change, the chilling hand of poverty brings many to bitter repentance. I muſt, however, leave you," ſaid the Lieutenant, "for a couple of hours; there is great news expected in town; but I muſt not leave you to your ſorrows. I will lock up the miniature in my bureau, and we will both forget we have ever ſeen it."

"But

"But I have promiſed, my dear," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "to return it; upon my honor, my ſacred word, every thing that is binding, to return it to the poor youth when he calls for it."

"And can you be ſo infatuated, by falſe notions of probity, to betray your child to diſhonor? What a pretty circumſtance would it be, for this favorite of her innocent, her infant days, to have it in his power to ſhew her future huſband ſuch a token of her folly and weakneſs. No, no my deareſt woman, he muſt never have it more!"

"I ſhall die with ſhame, with ſorrow, to diſappoint him; when it was his tenderneſs—"

"Well, well, my dear," ſaid Mr. Overbury, "you have truſted to my judgment upon many important occaſions, and I have the vanity to think never repented your conduct; will you then deny me the pleaſure of being the guardian of our child's reputation? The young man is a dangerous acquaintance, and muſt be broken with, though in a ſoft and civil manner. I confeſs he has acted kindly by you, but let not his generoſity miſlead you; Elfrida Overbury muſt not be his, and the ſooner he knows our determination the better; ſupport me, as I once believed you ever would, and all will yet be well.

Mrs. Overbury was ſilent, but unconvinced of the juſtice of her huſband's conduct. How altered he is! ſaid ſhe. He who deſpiſed riches and honors, the parade and the foppery of life; to give up every ſubſtantial good, and even tranſgreſs the line of ſtrict honor; it is ſtrange, it is diſtreſſing; but his head, not his heart, is to blame.

The Lieutenant was reſolved to write to Mrs. Elliſon, and acquaint her with his fears reſpecting Wilmot and Elfrida, together with an account of his own proceedings in diſcountenancing his viſits; hoping to anſwer a double purpoſe by this mode of conduct, ſaving his child, and gaining Mrs. Elliſon's friendſhip and confidence.

" Accident," ſaid he, " Madam, has brought me to the knowledge of a circumſtance, which not only fills me with alarms, but which I muſt conceive it my duty to lay before you."

" My daughter is juſt at that critical age, when romance, not reaſon, holds the rein. I have ſeen a young gentleman, who, I find, has been brought up with her, and who, in my humble opinion, from ſound policy, ought to be guarded againſt. Should ſhe make a wrong choice, ſhe would ill reward your kindneſs, or fulfil our wiſhes. I ſhould, however, think it beſt, if I might preſume to ſuggeſt an hint, that the connexion might be

be broken up without any apparent deſign to ſeparate them. His reſidence at Arcadia will be ſhort, ſo that a little, ſeemingly undeſigned, excurſion, would anſwer every purpoſe, without putting notions in the young people's heads, which might not, perhaps, actually exiſt there; but your own diſcretion, Madam, will ſuggeſt the proper uſe of this intimation, from, &c. &c.

Mrs. Elliſon was thunderſtruck; this was not only an evil ſhe had never foreſeen, but an impeachment of her wiſdom, which there was no obviating; ſhe, therefore, thought it the ſhorteſt road to retrieve the error ſhe had fallen into, by following the Lieutenant's advice; and, having conſulted with Mr. Elliſon, ſhe told Elfrida ſhe would take her to Bath.

The Lieutenant had ſo pleaſed her, however, by his ſubmiſſion to her humor, and by his confidence in her underſtanding; and her change of condition having removed the ſtrongeſt bar between Mrs. Overbury and her child, ſhe wrote him the agreeable account, that all family reſtraint ſhould now be withdrawn, and that ſhe ſhould give Elfrida leave to correſpond with both her father and mother, which ſhe ſuppoſed they would ſoon learn from her own pen.

Elfrida was aſtoniſhed, but the cauſe of this change of government was to her wholly impenetrable; for ſhe little imagined that

her honeſt, humane, and deſerving Wilmot was the ſacrifice of atonement.

She prepared for Bath with reluctance, for ſhe ſhould not only be parted abruptly from Wilmot, but it would grieve him, ſhe well knew, to ſee her attended by Elliſon, in this journey of pleaſure, as it was called; but the fates had ſo decreed and ſhe muſt ſubmit; and to prevent all ſuſpicion of the true motive of their departure, which Mrs. Elliſon, for her own honor in the buſineſs, was anxious ſhould not tranſpire, Mr. Wilmot and his family were invited to breakfaſt at Arcadia-houſe, to bid them adieu.

They came, all but Edmund, who durſt not truſt himſelf under Elliſon's obſerving eye, he therefore looked at the coach, as it paſſed his father's ſtudy-window, kiſſed his hand to the company, and ſhut himſelf up for ſeveral hours, his heart telling him his tender attachment to Elfrida was diſcovered, and that this ſudden Bath ſcheme, though appearances were ſo well preſerved, was a meditated ſtroke againſt his peace; on Elliſon alone, however, he fixed for his enemy and betrayer, but there was no complaining, much leſs revenging the blow.

In this mortified ſtate he aſked his father's permiſſion to return to his uncle, ſaying he was afraid he could not ſpare him; ſo cutting off twelve days from the length of his intended viſit, he ſettled it to ſpend four of them

them in London with Mrs. Overbury, where at leaſt he ſhould have the happineſs of talking of Elfrida.

He took an affectionate leave of Hannah, enjoining her to let him hear from her upon all important occaſions, and even conquered himſelf ſo far as not to mention what he had upon his heart, and at his *own* appointed time left the country.

Lieutenant Overbury was better ſkilled in manœuvring than to ſuffer his work to be incompleat; for upon going to the coffee-houſe to write the fatal letter, he took care to ſend his wife an agreeable companion, to chat with her and keep up her ſpirits, whilſt he was forming his plans of future operation; and the next day, telling her the ſmoke of London hurt his lungs, ſhe became as eager as himſelf to return to Warwickſhire, the air of which he ſaid was to him ſo ſalutary; then engaging his London friend not to give the young gentleman that had called upon them their addreſs, but to amuſe him with expectations of their return; of all which he informed Mrs. Elliſon, who, as an equivalent favor, told him he would ſoon embrace his daughter, for that the young people's marriage ſhould take place almoſt immediately after their Bath expedition, and ſhe ſuppoſed would produce a general viſit to the metropolis.

Poor Wilmot, the good-natured dupe upon this occaſion, was extremely afflicted when Mrs. Overbury was not to be met with; it never, however, entered his liberal mind, that Mr. Overbury had formed a plot againſt him; he went immediately to Eton upon this diſappointment, and, with an aching heart, applied himſelf to buſineſs.

Elfrida was at length almoſt eighteen, when ſhe received orders from Mrs. Elliſon, with the ſanction, ſhe ſaid, of parental authority, to look upon her ſon-in-law as the man deſtined for her huſband; and that as ſoon as they were united ſhe was to ſet off for London, and be reſtored to her long-loſt relations.

What a tempting condition for, and what a flattering conſequence of her obedience; but how could ſhe conſent to marry Elliſon, when her whole heart was full of Wilmot, whoſe name ſhe muſt never, ſhe was well aſſured, upon ſuch an event taking place, mention, or one of the kind ſervices he had done her.

Perſecution began on all ſides to ſtare her in the face. She was now half inclined to caſt herſelf at Elliſon's feet, and implore him not to accept her hand; but from the recollection that he was no ſtranger to the feelings of her ſoul, ſhe conceived him incapable, by his acquieſcence with the propoſal of his relations, if it was not his abſolute

late ſuggeſtion, of being touched by her tears, unmindful as he proved himſelf of the violence which her affections muſt ſuſtain.

She next had it in contemplation to win Mrs. Elliſon to her wiſhes, but this hope ſhe alſo gave up, from a conviction of its inutility; and to fill up the meaſure of her diſtreſs Hannah affected to be in the Elliſons' intereſt, ſhe, therefore, had no reſource in her advice.

The poor woman was terrified into this behavior, by Mrs. Elliſon's denouncing wrath and vengeance againſt every perſon that encouraged Elfrida to oppoſe her wiſhes, and the wiſhes of her father and mother.

Thus ſurrounded with difficulties, perplexities and alarms, the poor Elfrida reſolved to fly for refuge to the parental boſom, and make it the repoſitory of all her hopes and fears.

She accordingly, having already exchanged ſeveral dutiful and affectionate epiſtles with them, ſat down to her writing-table, and, with all the powers ſhe was miſtreſs of, painted her ſituation to them; lamenting in a moſt particular manner, that the huſband choſen for her, ſhould, of all men living, be the unprovoked, yet inveterate enemy of her deareſt friend; a circumſtance which, if he had been otherwiſe unexceptionable,

would have determined her, without a moment's heſitation, to refuſe him. What weight, ſhe obſerved, muſt it not, therefore, have with her, when joined with forcible objections to his temper and his morals. That ſuch a ſtep would make her bluſh to behold the light, ſo high a crime did ſhe deem ingratitude; and that death was a thouſand times preferable to living, to ſhut her door againſt the friend of her heart, the companion of her infancy, the preſerver of her life. That ſhe ſhuddered at the bare idea of what a monſter ſhe would appear in his ſight. In a word, if pathos could have melted Mr. Overbury's heart, ſhe had been ſucceſsful; but avarice and ambition, under the deceiving forms of tenderneſs and true regard for his child's happineſs, hardened it to cruelty, that her prayers were of no effect, her remonſtrances in vain.

She then wrote to him, and told him it was her reſolution to devote her youth to grief, and, ſince ſhe could not live to make him happy, die to deliver him from all diſtreſs upon her account.

The Lieutenant was in deſpair, and Mrs. Overbury beyond all deſcription wretched; when it occurred to the blinded father of Elfrida, noble, generous and good, in his natural diſpoſition, but now warped into a ſtern and arbitrary character, to ſend for Wilmot, and inform him of the miſery

miſery which his acquaintance with their child threatened to bring down upon their heads.

Wilmot rode poſt to London.

"Come, younggentleman," ſaid the Lieutenant, "now I will play the touchſtone with you, and try if you are a current friend or not."

"You love my daughter, and her friendſhip for you is the declared obſtacle to her obedience to her father. The affection ſhe bears you is that of a ſiſter. I need not tell you ſhe cannot be yours, without cruſhing our deareſt hopes; hopes that, to your knowledge, have been purchaſed at a ſevere price."

"Mrs. Elliſon," continued the Lieutenant, "has ſettled every point to our entire ſatisfaction; but Elfrida will not conſent to marry young Elliſon; we have the diſtreſs to diſcover, beſides a few girliſh objections, from notions of gratitude, which your conduct towards her has unfortunately given birth to, and which you only can remove; be then our advocate with our child, to bring her back to her duty; let us owe the accompliſhment of our happineſs to you, and prove to us you deſerve her; and we will lament, with you, that it is impoſſible you ſhould obtain her without ruin to us all. You know her gentle temper, and you know how tenderly ſhe is attached to her pa-

rents. Our Elfrida, Mr. Wilmot, is not one of thoſe girls who can caſt off nature to become a wife; her eſteem, her friendſhip, will be enſured to you by this generous act, and we will thank you with our lateſt breath."

Wilmot was ſilent, and apparently much agitated.

"Speak, young Gentleman," ſaid the Lieutenant, "ſpeak your determination, be it as unpropitious to my wiſhes as it may; nor add deceit to cruelty. If you can deſire to rob us of our (as we may call it) newly reſtored child; if you are capable of trying to withhold her from our arms, avow it; nor fear from me either oppoſition or treachery; for ſhould it be poſſible for you, under ſuch a predicament, to win Elfrida Overbury, I ſhall feel no pain in renouncing my unnatural offſpring; but remember, if you fail, as I have every truſt in heaven and my child you would, no after-repentance can avail you; you muſt fall with us, Mr. Wilmot, never to riſe again."

"I will ſhew you, Mr. Overbury," ſaid Wilmot, "that the youth before you merits a better fate, ſo far as good principles may be called merit, than he has met with; and may you never look back to this moment with ſelf-condemnation! You are benevolent, you are liberal-minded, Sir, and yet you aſk me to deſtroy myſelf to promote your

your imagined felicity; you have, nevertheleſs, loved, Sir.—"

"I have," replied Mr. Overbury, "but if Mr. Cluwyd, as you muſt have heard, had not bid me wed his daughter, I would have ſacrificed my paſſion to her advantage; ſhe knows it was my intention to have fled the country."

"But, Sir, allow me to ſay, I have not from choice become what I feel myſelf to Miſs Overbury, it was ſympathy that attached us, and infant innocence and endearments that cemented our affection; we know of no ties but thoſe of tenderneſs, we had heard of no good but that of meriting, we had not even an idea of ſex, but were drawn to approve each other by a ſimilitude of taſte, a coincidence of ſentiment, an union of heart, as intimate, and, we believed, as indiſſoluble as that of ſoul and body; it was, in fact, Sir, a divine attraction; the hand that formed us, ſeemed to have formed us for each other; and ſhall a human fiat preſume to break—"

"You are far gone, young Gentleman," ſaid the Lieutenant, "in romance, but you will pleaſe to recollect, that it is long ſince I have been diſenchanted; the affections of Mrs. Overbury's father were cooled towards her by his artful wife; his roof no longer was a ſhelter for her head, and I was called the cauſe, even to the endangering of her ſpotleſs

leſs fame, and required by Mr. Cluwyd to prevent every probable and alarming conſequence of our attachment, in the world's eye, by immediately becoming her huſband; and is this a caſe in point with my child? Elfrida, Sir, has been brought up with the expectation of a large fortune; we have denied ourſelves the delights of her infancy, to procure her thoſe expectations; a huſband ſuitable to herſelf in age, in education, in proviſion, ſolicits her hand; Mrs. Elliſon, her patroneſs, as well as relation, relaxes her authority, and bids us prepare our eyes to behold, and our hearts to embrace, our deareſt, our long-loſt Elfrida; to this point we have attained, and you, Mr. Wilmot, are the only impediment, from our child's falſe notions of the rights of friendſhip, to perfecting the ſcene, and the curtain muſt drop that for ever obſcures our hopes; our Elfrida muſt continue an alien to father and mother, and the barbed arrow of diſappointment pierce their breaſts, unleſs by one bleſſed exertion of your humanity, you can conſent to ſave them."

"I ſee it all," ſaid Wilmot, "and will be your ſon; the ſon of your approbation; and, may I prove a falſe prophet, but my heart tells me I ſhall be the ſon of your regret. I will fly my native country, ſince I muſt forego all I hold dear in it; and will preſume to write to Miſs Overbury for the

firſt time in my life; and you, Sir, if you pleaſe, ſhall read my letter before it is diſpatched; nay, I will requeſt you to encloſe it under cover, from yourſelf; help me then to pen and ink, and it ſhall be inſtantly done."

He told Elfrida that he was preparing for India, to improve his fortune; and that it would give him infinite pleaſure to behold her in the houſe of her delighted father and mother before his departure; that he was authorized by thoſe dear relations to aſk her friendſhip, and intreat her to give him a kind place in her remembrance, even when the wife of Mr. Elliſon, and that they promiſed to do every thing in their power to obtain him, at leaſt the acquaintance of that Gentleman, whenever he returned to England, as their great favorite; for that to make him amends for the loſs of his infant-happineſs, they had given him a firſt place in their eſteem, and that of Mr. and Mrs. Overbury was a gift of value; that he viſited them daily, and ſhould be permitted ſo to do until he embarked, which he believed would be about the time of her arrival in London."

"Wilmot loves me no longer," ſaid Elfrida, with ſtreaming eyes, "he can bear to ſee me the wife of a man that has rudely treated him, and will interrupt our friendly intercourſe; he conſpires with my father and

mother

mother to precipitate me into a ſtate for which I am totally unfit. My perſon may be given to Elliſon, but I cannot command my affections, I cannot beſtow them upon the enemy of Wilmot.— Was it for this he ſaved my life; won my infant attachment; accompliſhed himſelf under my eye; taught me to make diſtinctions that muſt now ſhock my ſenſibility; awakened all the finer feelings of my ſoul; pointed out to me whatever was ſublime and beautiful in creation; gave me clear ideas of the delights of friendſhip, and joys of ſocial life? only to call upon me, to ſacrifice them all on the altar of ambition, the altar of my deſtruction.

"And muſt I exchange mental pleaſures for the ſhadow of happineſs, live under continual conſtraint, check my natural propenſities, war againſt my inclinations, and counteract every honeſt and amiable impulſe of my ſoul? But Wilmot has forſaken me, betrayed me, and I will not complain. My father and mother ſhall have their victim to filial obedience, they ſhall complete their cruel kindneſs, they ſhall ſee the inſufficiency of wealth to ſupport ſuch a heart as mine; for Wilmot, the advocate of all that ſpoke peace to the jarring paſſions, Wilmot, that ſaved, now deſtroys."

In the midſt of this diſtreſs, Mrs. Elliſon ſent to know her final anſwer reſpecting her ſon. Elfrida promiſed to attend her in half

half an hour, and wiſhed to relieve her heart, for that ſhort period, by unburdening her mind to her old friend, Mrs. Jenkins.

A RESOLUTION.

Hannah, for whom Elfrida immediately ſent a ſervant, no ſooner read Wilmot's letter, than ſhe was aware from whence it originated. Dear, dear Gentleman," ſaid ſhe, " how cutting it is to think of the trial he has undergone; this is Captain Overbury's work; I know it right well; juſt ſo, out of the very violence of his love, would he have left the woman he doated upon to break her heart, and then have broke his own, afterwards, from incurable ſorrow."

" But how, my dear Hannah, how," ſaid Elfrida, " am I to bring my mind to a fit ſtate for approaching the ſacred altar, and devoting all my thoughts, my cares, to a man—"

" It is terrible bitter," ſaid Hannah, " but what can be ſaid for it? Mr. Wilmot, God bleſs him, would think it a ſin to run away with you, for your own happineſs, and I don't ſee any other means of eſcaping."

" Yes, Hannah, the grave; you will ſee me ſoon lodged there; and pray, my dear woman,

woman, let theſe two letters be buried with me; my peace they have killed at one ſtroke; if ſuch wretchedneſs is the gift of good parents, what have bad ones more to beſtow?"

"For certain," ſaid Hannah, "your elopements are very undutiful things, and ſeem to ſet all lawful power, as well as womanly decency, at defiance; but then to wed the man one hates—"

"That he is Wilmot's enemy is the ſevere ſtroke. Marry the enemy of my deareſt friend!"

"Aye, and moreover," ſaid Hannah, "one that has always delighted in teizing and tormenting you; and, mercy upon us, who knows, beautiful and heavenly-minded as you are, mayhap marries you as much for the ſake of that, as for any other earthly thing; but then what is to be done? Poor Captain Overbury has met with ſo many diſappointments in his life, and ſuch *miſ*-uſage, that it goes to the very heart of one to think of tormenting him."

"Beſt and moſt deceived of men!" ſaid Elfrida, "You are right, Hannah, nor ſhall he receive a wound from his child's hand, undone as ſhe muſt be, undone for ever; for I will no longer reſiſt my deſtiny; you, Hannah, ſhall deck the bride with tears; already, my tender woman, they begin to flow, but weep not for me, my diſſolution cannot

cannot be far diſtant, and the grave will give me everlaſting tranquillity."

"And yet," ſaid Hannah, "what a pity it is, that all the good things in the world have no reliſh for you; what would not thouſands of ladies give to be juſt like you, here in Arcadia?

Miſs Overbury looked wild. "I will fly this once loved ſpot," ſaid ſhe, "it is all the chance I have to fly diſtraction, if Wilmot has ſeemed to approve this buſineſs only from exalted notions of generoſity, But I know not what I would ſay, my dear Hannah."

"Sweet, ſweet creature," ſaid Hannah, ſobbing, "would I could ſerve you, but we muſt live in this world as well as love, and where a young fellow has not the means.—"

"You are falling into great errors, ſaid Elfrida, was Mr. Elliſon any other man upon earth, I would chearfully accept him; as my father and mother's choice, it would only be a ſecond ſacrifice of me to do them pleaſure; or were Elliſon and Wilmot unknown to each other, I think I could ſubdue all my terrors of his ſtrange turns of temper, but to marry, not merely againſt my heart's inclination, but to the mortal wounding of my friendſhip for one ſo deſerving, and to whom I am ſo much

obliged

obliged as I am to Mr. Wilmot, I cannot, cannot bear it."

"Ah! dear Miſs Elfrida, but I will ſay nothing—Who is the he, I wonder, that could like to have his wife ſo much given in mind to another man?"

"Any liberal perſon, Mrs. Jenkins; we live in Arcadia until we make its inhabitants the ſtandard of all human conduct; but believe me, though the world is not filled with ſuch characters as Wilmot, it is not wholly overſpread with ſuch beings as Elliſon.

"Yet what can be ſaid for it," ſaid Hannah; "there is not a ſoul, if you will not have Elliſon, but will conclude you ſtark mad in love with Mr. Wilmot, and the poor Captain and Mrs. Overbury, whoſe arms are now opened in expectation of embracing you—"

"They ſhall not extend them in vain; they have the courage to truſt the conſequences of this compelled ſtep; it ſhall then be taken. Henceforth, Hannah, I will be calm; I will thank you for your good intention in ſaving my life, though it would have been much happier for me to have died, than to look back, as I impiouſly fear I ſhall, to that providential deliverance, with ingratitude to heaven; but death is no more than death let it come in what ſhape, and at what period it may; and as I did not periſh then by

by a ſudden and violent, I muſt content myſelf with lingering out my days, the victim of a ſlow, conſuming and a ſecret diſeaſe."

"But bleſs your deareſt life, Miſs Elfrida, do determine what meſſage you will ſend Mrs. Elliſon, for this delay will only make her outrageous, without ſaving you a tittle."

"Go, Mrs. Jenkins, for I feel it muſt be ſo; go, for it may be of ſervice to you to be my meſſenger, and tell Mrs. Elliſon, I will no longer oppoſe her wiſhes, on condition that I am permitted to ſet off immediately to London."

Mrs. Elliſon emptied her purſe upon the table, to reward Hannah for her good news, in which were four guineas and a ſhilling. "She is once again," ſaid ſhe, "my child, and in every future inſtance ſhall be miſtreſs of herſelf."

"Yes," ſaid Elfrida, "every thing but happineſs my friends are ready to beſtow upon me."

When Elfrida entered the ſaloon, ſhe found the whole family aſſembled, Mr. Elliſon, ſenior, got up to receive her, his ſon following at an humble diſtance.

"The end of your cares, my dear ſon," ſaid Mrs. Elliſon, preſenting Elfrida to him, "is now arrived, for this dear child at length accepts

accepts you, and I am happy thus to beſtow her hand."

The poor Elfrida involuntarily drew back, tears ſtarted to her eyes, and her feātures wore every mark of diſtreſs; but Elliſon was too much taken up with his own joy, and his father and mother with their triumph to pay any attention to what would greatly have alarmed leſs intereſted and more humane perſons.

Dinner over, of which Elfrida had not taſted, happineſs was drank to them in a bumper by Mr. and Mrs. Elliſon, who, underſtanding how to conduct themſelves upon ſuch occaſions, ordered coffee in the drawing-room, and ſoon after retired.

Elfrida was ſcarcely able to ſupport herſelf when ſhe ſaw Elliſon approaching her; he took her unreſiſting hand, called himſelf the happieſt of men, and might, perhaps, in any other woman's ſight, have made a very tolerable figure; but to Elfrida an executioner would have had a thouſand more charms, for ſhe wiſhed to die rather than become his wife.

Elliſon was chagrined at his ill ſucceſs in recommending himſelf. "To what," ſaid he, "Madam, am I to impute your *ſtill* unfavorable brow? is it poſſible I can be curſed with a rival in your love, as well as in your friendſhip? for ſuch are the diſtinctions you have taught me; were I ſure of ſuch

ſuch an evil I ſhould be frantic; and the frantic man, Miſs Elfrida, not being maſter of his own actions, cannot be anſwerable for them."

"Sir," returned Elfrida, "you ſeem *ſtill* to delight in aſſuming the character you know I leaſt approve," (ſhe loſt her power of utterance for a moment, from the exceſs of her feelings) "I had a prepoſſeſſion; what could give you a right to puniſh the object of it? nay, Sir," (for he was furiouſly breaking out) "never attempt to fetter me at all points, but hear me patiently, ſo far from it, that your delicacy, your honor, your humanity, ought to induce you to pity and ſpare me, under ſuch a predicament, and, inſtead of ſoliciting, refuſe my offered hand."

"A man in love! my Elfrida," ſaid Elliſon.

"I know of no love," ſaid ſhe, "that is not tender of the happineſs of the woman beloved. The worſt paſſions, Sir, we are well aſſured, may prophanely aſſume that gentle name; the Valet that would have violated the perſon of my dear mother, and rioted in the blood of my grandfather and his houſhold, called his motive love; and even malice and revenge has been bold enough to wear the ſame diſguiſe."

"And with which, my dear Madam," ſaid

ſaid Elliſon, "of all theſe flattering appellations, do you honor my pretenſions?"

"Shall I be plain with you, Sir?" ſaid Elfrida.

"O, I entreat it as a favor," ſaid Elliſon.

"Your attachment to me, Sir," ſaid Elfrida, "I do conceive to proceed from oppoſition."

"Oppoſition! Miſs Elfrida; take care, Madam, take care. Oppoſition! to whom? to what?"

"To the wiſhes of the woman before you. You know our tempers and our ſentiments are widely different; you have merit, no doubt, it is my misfortune not to be able to do it juſtice."

"And why, Madam?" cried he, "Why?"

"I will tell you, Sir."

"You need not trouble yourſelf," ſaid Elliſon, "I know already, 'tis Wilmot, the artful Wilmot."

"Mr. Wilmot," returned ſhe, "is beyond the utmoſt reachings of your ſcorn, nor ſhall I feel the ſtroke."

"A mere Proteus," continued Elliſon, "who to come at your fortune, could lick the foot that ſpurns, could weep and ſmile, and creep and look ſuch pity-moving things, to pleaſe and captivate you;" he pauſed.

"Proceed

"Proceed, Sir," ſaid Elfrida, "upon this ſubject, I wiſh not to interrupt you; fill up the meaſure of your recommendations to me, by the illiberality of your ſentiments, the venom of your ſarcaſms; and then aſſure yourſelf of Elfrida's hand, by her paſſive alienation of her rights, as an individual, to do you pleaſure."

"And are theſe the moments given us by our indulgent relations? this our tender interview?"

"The color of our converſation," ſaid Elfrida; "is all your own; I had reſolved to devote myſelf, without complaint, to gratify the ambition of my friends; but it was ſo new to me to have an aweful change of condition before me, that if you, Sir, had meant me kindly, you would much rather have ſoothed than terrrified; you would have tried to win not to inſult my heart. Wilmot, for the laſt time I mention him, if you retract not your intentions, deſerves, and ever ſhall enjoy my friendſhip, my eſteem, my gratitude; nor will I marry even you, Sir, let the conſequence be what it may, if you again ſtrike at the object of thoſe rational, juſt, and honeſt ſuſceptibilities. You know we were brought up together, like a brother, he was dear to me, like a brother he ſaved me from your lively frolics, how—"

"O Elfrida!" ſaid Elliſon.

"I have

"I have not a thought of him I am aſhamed to avow; my heart may, as you ſuſpect, be touched, but my principles are untainted; I would not marry him were he bleſſed, as you are, with fortune, with all this declared approbation, without the full and perfect conſent of my father and mother, and, if you *can* make choice of a woman, whoſe affections you doubt, and whoſe good opinion you do not ſeem deſirous of cultivating, you will learn to judge what ſacred notions I entertain of filial duty and filial tenderneſs, by what I can do for their happineſs, where you are concerned; and you would do well, that ſincerity might dwell in my heart, and veracity on my lips, to wait till time and your generous treatment might enable me to tell you what you was to me without offending your ear."

"How auſtere! how commanding your manner is!" ſaid Elliſon, "but, as I cannot live without you, I will accord to your terms; it ſhall be my endeavor to ſoften, to win upon your ſenſibility; but you will be uniformly good, nor deny me the ſatisfaction of hearing your favorable thoughts of me, ſo ſoon as I am happy enough to awaken ſuch in your boſom."

"I will only, Mr. Elliſon," ſaid Elfrida, "make one obſervation; you ſay you cannot exiſt with*out* me, and thus, for your own felicity, become unmindful of my claims

claims to conſideration. Suppoſe I was to tell you I could not exiſt *with* you; are not the laws of God and man as much my defence as they are yours? you cannot conquer your feelings, I have as little power over mine; you look upon the ceremony that would unite us, with delight, I with horror; you promiſe yourſelf you ſhall rejoice to live with me, I hope for peace only in the grave; and, *now* Sir, ſupported as you are by my relations, you have the advantage of me; but remember, if you ſee my health decline, my ſpirits ſink into dejection, my diſſolution drawing near, remember you are not deceived, not even ſelf-deceived. My mind, you know, is my own; and though my conduct muſt be ſuch, out of reſpect to myſelf, as cannot diſhonor you; in my kingdom, the kingdom of my mind, I ſhall be free; for beyond this unhappy perſon, in a peculiar manner unhappy, I will ſay it, becauſe pleaſing to you.—"

"Perdition, torture," cried Elliſon "yet you *ſhall* be mine, and I will love you, adore you, in ſpite of all your inſulting cruelty."

"Beyond my perſon you will have no power; and here I muſt beg our firſt conference may terminate. Make what report of me you think proper."

Elliſon was too wiſe ever to complain of what paſſed between Elfrida and Wilmot, for in the firſt place he was not without his fears, as the boy was a great favorite with the Lady Miſtreſs of Arcadia, that ſome romantic whim, if ſhe knew the true ſtate of affairs, might operate in his favor; and, in the ſecond, it would have been very unſeaſonable to have told ſuch a tale after declaring his paſſion, and ſhewn himſelf capable of ſo unknightly an act, as *knowingly* to take a fair lady's hand by violence, an act ſo contrary to all the rules of chivalry as to endanger his reputation at all points; for no ſooner did this young ſpark dip into his eventful hiſtory, than he was aware how far his mother-in-law was advanced upon heroic ground, and therefore greatly preferred the ſafe to the hazardous mode of conduct, namely, ſmiling in the midſt of bitterneſs and wrath, to diſcharging any part of it, which would recoil, perhaps, upon his own head.

Having taken a turn or two about the ſaloon to collect himſelf, and ſet his features for the buſineſs of the day, "Let me, Madam," ſaid he, to Elfrida, "have the honor of leading you to our relations."

Elfrida again ſtarted, ſighed, looked up to heaven, then gave him her hand, as he had held his out during the reluctance ſhe had ſhewn, and he aſſuming an air of the utmoſt ſatisfaction, was of courſe congratulated

congratulated by his friends upon his approaching nuptials; for, in proportion to Elfrida's diſinclination to become his wife, he ſeemed to confirm himſelf in the reſolution of being her huſband.

A JOURNEY.

Elfrida requeſted to change her apartment to a wing of the houſe, which had only a view of the diſtant hills; the lawn, the canal, the ſea, ſhe could not endure to behold, for Wilmot and thoſe were inſeparable objects.

She was alſo ſpared, at her earneſt petition, every mention of the preparations, as ſhe called them, for ſacrifice, except the execution of the marriage-articles, when Elliſon, with the importance of an approved lover, ſupported her and guided her hand, or her name would not have been legible.

The night preceding the great day ſhe wiſhed to have paſſed with Mrs. Jenkins, but recollecting the duties of her approaching character, and the honor and delicacy ſhe ought to obſerve, ſhe did not ſuffer herſelf to breathe that wiſh; ſhe reſolved to turn every ſoft remembrance of Wilmot out of her heart, and, for the purpoſe of informing herſelf clearly of ſuch as ſhe muſt

particularly guard againſt, her mind took a general review of every thought concerning him, and ſhe was found by the good woman, at the hour ſhe was ordered to attend her, ſtupified with grief, and only thrown upon the bed, without being undreſſed, a circumſtance to which ſhe never once adverted, until Hannah's ſurprize pointed it out.

She aſked for a few lavender-drops upon a bit of ſugar, took a diſh of tea which was brought her, and ſuffered herſelf to be adorned, only taking care to ſeat herſelf far out of the view of her dreſſing-glaſs, and all pale and trembling was conducted by the exulting bride-groom to the church, where a ſtranger performed the ceremony, Hannah ſtanding behind her with a bottle of hartſhorn and ſilently weeping; this was Elliſon's thought, though he did not aſſign his reaſons for it, for he was fearful the ſight of Wilmot's father would have thrown his lovely, though mourning, bride, into ſuch diſtreſs, as would have revealed all that he wiſhed to conceal.

The ceremony over, ſhe haſtily preſſed forward, to hide herſelf in the carriage, and ſought to be alone.

But Elliſon, now ſure of her, would not leave her. "My beloved Elfrida," ſaid he, "forgive the man that has thus become your h' band, and compaſſionate his diſtracted

tracted ſtate of mind; to loſe you he was not equal to, but if a life of tenderneſs, of friendſhip, of adoration, can atone for his conduct, you ſhall never look back to this day with regret. Pity, pardon and endure me in your ſight, or baniſh me until you can extend to me your unreluctant hand. I will henceforth be whatever you are pleaſed to make me; but defer not beyond the abſolutely neceſſary time to reconcile yourſelf to my company and converſation; defer not to give happineſs to your father and mother; the Elliſon you have known me ſhall this day expire; I will be gentle, tender, good; and, O Elfrida, let not the unconquerable affection your manifold beauties inſpired me with, be our deſtruction; but pardon your lover, and pity and receive your huſband."

She held out her hand to him. "We are now," ſaid ſhe, "the ſon and daughter of Captain and Mrs. Overbury, our happineſs will be theirs. I have much to be forgiven by you; but you will, I dare hope from your behavior at this inſtant, inſinuate yourſelf into my voluntary, as you have obtained my ſanctified attachment; let this day then change us both. I ſhall always remember my plighted faith is your's, and that you have a right to regulate my actions. When do we ſet off for Bath?"

"In a few hours," ſaid Elliſon, and then kneeling before her; "Woman of my heart," ſaid he, "relieve me from the apprehenſions which ſome of your words have left upon my mind; do not weep, or hate me in your private moments, but recover your enchanting chearfulneſs, and live, if not for me, for your beloved father and mother."

She again held out her hand to him, begged he would riſe, and rejoin the company.

Elliſon, in order to ſurprize her agreeably, aſked Hannah's huſband to let her accompany them to London; "We will reſtore her to you," ſaid he, "as ſoon as we can part with her."

Hannah was wild with pleaſure; ſhe ran, though forbidden, into Elfrida's chamber; and ſaid, "I ſhall ſee Captain and Mrs. Overbury, as well as you, Madam; the Mr. Elliſon I once hated, has had the goodneſs to propoſe my going up with you, and Richard is willing to ſpare me, and I ſhall travel in the coach with you, and methought Mr. Elliſon looked quite handſome when he told me ſo."

Elfrida felt this mark of kindneſs and attention; ſhe aroſe, and, for the firſt time, walked to her toilet. "I look very pale, Hannah," ſaid ſhe, "but I have paſſed, you know, through a ſolemn ceremony. Mr. Elliſon

Elliſon has greatly obliged me by procuring me your attendance, and I will go and thank him." She went to the door, then ſtopped, "No," ſaid ſhe, "I will wait his coming to me; I think he will not forget to lead me to his relations."

Elliſon preſented himſelf. "Mrs Jenkins here," ſaid he, "that is contrary to agreement; I intended, my Elfrida, to have given you a pleaſing and unexpected token of my remembrance of you, by producing her when we came to ſet off, but I ſee there was no preventing her betraying me."

"I am not inſenſible," ſaid Elfrida, "of your kindneſs, and it is with pleaſure I acknowledge you have, Sir, this day, laid me under an obligation to you."

Elliſon called himſelf the happieſt of men, but ventured not even to kiſs Elfrida's hand, for fear of diſcompoſing her.

This incident had a viſible good effect upon her ſpirits; ſhe was determined to ſee all the merit of it, but an unlucky recollection of what Wilmot was accuſtomed to do for her, not to *atone* for his faults, but ſeparately and diſintereſtedly to promote her felicity, threw her into great diſtreſs.

"Yet, O why did he not," ſaid her heart, "leave my father and mother to exert their authority over me, and make me miſerable, without uniting with them, in this only inſtance of unkindneſs, againſt my everlaſting

peace; but the action was not his own; he did it, I am perſuaded, at the requeſt of thoſe who conceived they had a right to deſtroy me."

Mr. and Mrs. Elliſon were to accompany them to Bath, but, not to part man and wife, they ſaid, or diſappoint the wiſhes of the worthy Mrs. Jenkins, they went in their chaiſe, Elliſon, Elfrida, and this humble friend in their coach.

Elfrida ſhut her eyes until they had cleared the park-wall, and then gave one ſigh to the loſt pleaſure of Arcadia, and bent her mind to be amuſed with new objects; they arrived ſafe at Bath, where, having ſtaid a couple of days, they left their father and mother Elliſon in that city, and purſued their journey to London.

Mrs. Elliſon had informed Captain Overbury when the nuptial-day was fixed, nor did Hannah fail to communicate the ſame intelligence to Wilmot. "Your letter," ſaid ſhe, "coſt Miſs Elfrida many tears, but comfort yourſelf the beſt you can, for if ſhe might have choſe, the lot would ſurely have fallen upon Jonas; you underſtand me, Sir, and will forgive my plain way of writing, but what of that, the fineſt pens can only tell you truths in finer words, but it is all the ſame at laſt; and the more is the pity that I have no better news for you."

Wilmot

Wilmot flew to Mrs. Overbury; "Behold, Madam," ſaid he, giving her Hannah's letter, "the criſis of my melancholy deſtiny is arrived; your Elfrida will tomorrow be Elliſon's Elfrida; reſtore me my precious depoſit, and let me try what winds and waves can do to ſooth my wretchedneſs.

"Alas, my noble minded young friend, I am now going to loſe your eſteem, deſervedly to loſe it; my huſband ſurprized me contemplating the features of my beloved child; he has got poſſeſſion of our Elfrida's performance, and, forgetting the innocence of the heart that dictated the motto, ſays, it would be diſhonorable to her character, for it to be in any body's poſſeſſion but his own."

Wilmot ſmote his forehead; "I will not complain, Madam," ſaid he, "I will not wound the mind I reſpect, but you have done me an irreparable injury, you have, unintentionally, deſtroyed me; may your Elfrida's preſence, nevertheleſs, make you forget him, that forgot himſelf to oblige you."

"My huſband is here," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "and I will venture to aſk him to reſtore it, your conduct towards us merits ſome high reward, and perhaps change of circumſtances may give birth to change of opinion. Moderate your diſtreſs, my dear

Wilmot, let him not ſee the utmoſt value you hold it in."

Captain Overbury ſhook him by the hand; but with all his firmneſs was ſhocked at his altered countenance; he ſat down, endeavored to ſtart unintereſting ſubjects; but his heart was touched, and he ſincerely pitied the victim of his pride and ambition.

Theſe returns of the Lieutenant's mind to its natural bent, he always labored hard to reſtrain and correct, but truth and humanity would force their way through all the bars which falſe prudence and reſolution could erect.

The moſt delightful ſcenes of happineſs had been enjoyed by him in the character of of a favored lover, an affectionate huſband, and a bleſſed father; his fire-ſide had known both ſocial, domeſtic and paternal pleaſures, though plenty had not preſided at his table, or elegance marked his footſteps.

"We have a requeſt to make you, my dear," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "with all ſubmiſſion, nevertheleſs, to your better judgement. Different age gives a different color to our actions; a preſent from our womanly Elfrida, would ill become her to beſtow, and could not with honor be aſked, even, perhaps, by the friend of her youth; but the picture this young gentleman intruſted with me, was an infant performance and an infant

fant gift; the offering, I may ſay, of infant gratitude. Can it not then, with propriety, be reſtored to him? Methinks I ſhould bluſh to know my Elfrida had ever committed an action that her father muſt correct the delicacy of."

"Young Gentleman," ſaid the Lieutenant, "do not be the leſs in love with virtue, becauſe ſhe may ſeem to wear a forbidding brow; I with-held not the picture from caprice, but from a nice, however poſſibly, miſtaken ſenſe of honor; I know the purity of my child's heart, and the nature of your infant friendſhip; be it therefore as you wiſh, but we muſt date the æra of its preſentation, to put it out of the power of time, chance, or malice, to give it an ill coloring.

"We will do more, my dear Sir," ſaid Wilmot, "than merely dating it, we will eraſe the precious motto by filling up the border; the ſervice I rendered your Elfrida merits no ſuch flattering teſtimony; and I would guard againſt every ſhadow of miſconſtruction as tenderly as her own father; the miniature, my dear Sir, is all I wiſh to be poſſeſſed of."

"It ſhall be yours," ſaid the Lieutenant, "I find you may be truſted; and may happy days and years await you, my good young Gentleman, for your heart is certainly in the right place."

Wilmot

Wilmot dipped a bruſh in ſome colors Mrs. Overbury helped him to at his repeated requeſt. "I ſhould be miſerable," ſaid he, "if I enjoyed a gratification at the expence of a moment's pain to the father and mother of Miſs Overbury, or the remoteſt poſſibility of endangering her ſpotleſs fame; in this ſtate, Sir, having totally expunged the letters, none will know the value of this portrait, but the unhappy youth who will never part with it more to the deareſt friend on earth."

"What do you do with yourſelf to-morrow?" ſaid Mr. Overbury at parting, "will you give us your company?"

"Ah, Sir? ſaid Wilmot.

"It ſhall be ſo," ſaid the Lieutenant, preſſing his hand, "for henceforth you ſhall be *my* Wilmot."

Wilmot ruſhed out to conceal his emotions, and miſtaking his way home, though a fine moon-light night, wandered for hours oppreſſed with his own thoughts; at length, ſaid he, I have loſt the daughter and gained the mother; Elfrida and I ſhall then, ſurely, be relations, of a kind that will ſuit her delicate ſituation; ſhe ſhall be my ſiſter, my ſiſter given by her father to Elliſon; and may ſhe be happy, however wretched that event muſt render me."

Mrs. Overbury ſaid many kind and ſoothing things to Wilmot, endeavored to keep him

him in converſation or employment the whole day, and promiſed him her unalterable friendſhip; "You ſhall write to me" ſaid ſhe, "and tell me all your deſtinations, the improvement of your fortune, your ſenſible remarks; indeed, Mr. Wilmot, it is in your power to afford me great entertainment."

Wilmot did his beſt to appear happy, but looked at his watch ſeveral different times, ſaid the weather was fine, and betrayed a conſciouſneſs of that day's tranſaction, and when no longer able to contain himſelf, "Elfrida Overbury," ſaid he, "is no more, and I muſt teach myſelf to revere Mrs. Eliſon."

He left them at eleven in the evening, and the next morning was in a high fever, a circumſtance the Lieutenant alone diſcovered by calling at his lodgings, for Wilmot had forbid their being made acquainted with it.

Mrs. Overbury flew to ſee him, and, kneeling by his bed-ſide, intreated him to live for her ſake. "I ſhall for ever be unhappy, Wilmot," ſaid ſhe, "if you do not recover; let not your dear friend's marriage take place under ſuch frightful auſpices as the death of a youth ſo deſervedly beloved; compoſe your mind, or, if it will relieve you, make my breaſt the repoſitory of your ſorrows. I know how inſenſibly your attachment has ſtolen upon you, grown with your

your growth and ſtrengthened with your ſtrength; but you have found a ſiſter without loſing a friend; for henceforth I will conſider you as my own child; for my peace ſake then, my tranquillity, live, my Wilmot live, and be to me a ſon."

Wilmot wiſhed to oblige her, but his fever was violent, and the combat between that and his conſtitution hard fought, the latter was, however, ſucceſsful, and he was again able to walk out, and Mrs. Overbury told him, that, if he wiſhed it, he ſhould bid her Elfrida adieu before he left England.

A MEETING.

Mr. and Mrs. Elliſon at length arrived in London, and never was meeting more tender or touching than that between the Captain, Mrs. Overbury and their lovely child, who almoſt even forgot Wilmot, in the rapture of her dear father and mother; and Elliſon behaved very well.

Hannah blubbered out her joy, but could not forbear thinking how much happier the ſcene would have been, if Wilmot, inſtead of Elliſon, had married Elfrida.

Mrs. Overbury, when they became a little compoſed, thought Elfrida much altered, the vivacity of her countenance was gone,

gone, and her fine bloom faded, but the difference of infancy and youth might have occaſioned the change, and ſhe ſought not to convince her heart of the painful truth.

Thus ſhe pined in thought, and Elfrida exerted herſelf to the utmoſt to appear tranquil.

"But my dear mother," ſaid ſhe, "how can I, when I look upon you, but lament the days, the years of ſupreme delight we have loſt by our ſeparation? had your Elfrida been permitted to grow up under your own eye, ſhe would not have been miſtreſs of ſo many, what the world calls elegant accompliſhments, indeed, but then ſhe would have been rich in content, and all her little powers would have been exerciſed to pleaſe you; and, O, Madam," added ſhe, in a half whiſper, "if you knew all, I deſerve to have been poor, for the beſt talents heaven has beſtowed upon me, are ſuch as fit me for a life of reſignation, of frugality, of obſcurity; I am thrown out of my track, and nature has ſuſtained a force, by making me a fine lady.

Mrs. Overbury, who felt every word ſhe uttered, preſſed her hand; "Life of my life," ſaid ſhe, "if it had depended upon my choice we had never been ſeparated."

Elliſon expreſſed a wiſh that they might be all one family, but the Lieutenant would not

not quit his old lodgings, and only begged to be indulged with as much of Elfrida's company as poſſible.

"My dear Sir," ſaid Elliſon, "all you have to fear from us is, that we ſhall oppreſs you with our kindneſs, if you can call it kind in us to devote a large portion of our time to you; I met you with ſentiments of eſteem and reſpect, but I ſhall take my leave with the warmeſt affection, the affection of a ſon."

Mr. Overbury endeavored to perſuade himſelf he was quite pleaſed and quite happy, but the ſight of Hannah reviving ſome recollections of the ſmarting heart under tender diſappointments, he ſighed and trembled for his Elfrida.

"What a bleſſed child ours is!" ſaid he to his wife, "what a countenance! ſhe would not diſgrace the higheſt ſituation; they have fortune ſufficient, however, and I do believe Elliſon will deſerve her."

"Heaven grant it," replied Mrs Overbury, "he is very attentive to our child, and very polite to us, but I wiſh his heart may be in his conduct; I do not take upon me to be an infallible tranſlator of looks, but if I am not very greatly deceived, Elliſon is one of thoſe who are ſubject to ſudden and violent changes of humor, and can hate tomorrow what he doated upon to day."

"What

"What an alarming and ungenerous picture," ſaid Mr. Overbury," have you drawn of a young fellow you have ſeen but for a few hours; if Elfrida is not herſelf the cauſe—"

"How, my dear," exclaimed Mrs Overbury, "would you inſinuate that our Elfrida—"

"Do underſtand me," ſaid Mr. Overbury, "I mean not that our child is capable of departing from the *great outline* of the duties to which ſhe has bound herſelf to adhere, but there are a thouſand *little intereſting touches* of *critical colorings*, that either *charm* or *hurt* the mind, for they operate in extremes, which obedience is too cold to dictate, and which love is too warm not to demand; we will, however, hope the beſt, nor anticipate ſorrow, it is both fooliſh and impious."

Elliſon entered with avidity into the diſſipation of the metropolis, was profuſe in adorning his wife, took her to court, to every place of polite reſort, and was flattered beyond meaſure by the admiration and envy her preſence excited.

A man of faſhion formed an intimacy with him, and drew him often from home; Elfrida was not pained by his abſence, and the pleaſure of her company made the Lieutenant for a time unmindful of the conſequence.

Hannah

Hannah ſought an opportunity of converſing with Mrs. Overbury alone, to open her whole heart to her; for though Mrs. Elliſon appeared quite ſatisfied with every thing, ſhe was perſuaded of the contrary, for Elliſon's ill-nature would ſometimes ſhew itſelf in his face, to let you know, Hannah would ſay to herſelf, that it was alive in his heart; and above all things it appeared a bad ſign to her of Elfrida's happineſs, that ſhe never pronounced the name of the worthy Mr. Wilmot, and had inſtructed her not to mention it upon any occaſion. Mr. Overbury penetrated her deſign, and, in ſome degree, her motives, and cautioned his wife, as ſhe valued her own peace, or his ſatisfaction, to decline every private interview; hence Mrs. Jenkins found herſelf conſtantly diſappointed in her attempts.

Wilmot having ſolicited and obtained both his uncle's and his father's conſent to go to India, was honored, through the intereſt of the former, with a moſt important commiſſion, relative to the recovery of immenſe wealth, buried and ſcattered in various parts of the ſcene of warfare and carnage in the Eaſtern world, which promiſed to lead to great advantage.

His father's large family induced him to part unreluctantly with this worthy ſon, on whom he could only beſtow his good wiſhes for his future advancement; and his uncle

uncle having married a woman who was not fond, ſhe ſaid, of relations living with man and wife, made him a handſome preſent to fit him out, and from family conſiderations rejoiced in his departure.

The young Gentleman was, however, ſo long in compleating his neceſſary preparations, that he was no ſtranger to the giddy and improper connexions which Elliſon had made, and, for Elfrida's ſake, lamented the diſcovery.

He had engaged to ſee Mrs. Overbury before he embarked, but learning that Elfrida almoſt lived with her father and mother, he would not preſume to wait upon them but by their own appointment, he accordingly wrote to them to grant him ſuch appointment, and reminded them of the promiſe which they had made him, of prevailing upon their daughter to permit him to bid her adieu.

This note was received by Mrs. Overbury when her daughter and ſhe were alone.

Elfrida was unſpeakably diſtreſſed, "O my deareſt mother," ſaid ſhe, "ſpare me the rencounter; my heart is right, but I could not anſwer for appearances; my infant attachment is deeply rooted; my huſband would not approve of my ſeeing him, and I will confeſs myſelf unequal to the taſk."

The

The Lieutenant and his wife having conſulted together, it was reſolved the former ſhould introduce the ſubject of Wilmot's approaching departure, and his requeſt to take leave of Mrs. Elliſon, when tête-a-tête with his ſon.

Elliſon commended the young man's ſpirit and conduct. "There is meaning, my dear Sir, in this," ſaid he; "he that has his fortune to make, has no other card to depend upon than changing the mild climate of Britain for the burning ſuns of the golden world. Will he not call upon us before he goes?"

"It is his wiſh," ſaid Mr. Overbury, "to bid our daughter farewell; and you, I dare believe, can have no objection."

"How, Sir!" ſaid Elliſon, "you do not take me, I hope, for an Italian huſband? Our Elfrida ſhall ever be miſtreſs of herſelf upon theſe occaſions. I know her well, purity is the inner garment of her ſoul; you will do me the juſtice to bear witneſs, the overture for Wilmot's viſiting us, came from me, though I forget not, Captain Overbury, there was a time when Elfrida called him her *own* Wilmot, but I alſo remember ſhe is now my wife."

There was a mixture of generoſity and pride, which the Lieutenant could not but perceive in this ſpeech; nor was his good opinion of his ſon-in-law much increaſed

creaſed when he found him ſo indelicate as to rally her at dinner upon her favorite's quitting his native country.

"We ſhall have him return a Nabob upon us," ſaid he, "many young fellows, who go out adventurers, as I preſume is the caſe with our young friend, have returned rolling in wealth. I wiſh him the treaſures of the Eaſt, to make him amends for his loſs of the bright gem my better deſtiny has made me maſter of; he knows its value, and would, I believe, exchange both Indies for it; but who can tell what may be in the chapter of probabilities for him; my mortality may give him an opportunity in his *nabobſhip*, to become a candidate for the hand I have robbed him of."

Elfrida was wounded; every tender ſcene of her infancy was revived in her memory; ſhe beheld Wilmot in the boat with her, ſhe ſighed, and with difficulty forbore giving a tear to the recollection.

Obſerving they were all ſilent, Mr. Eliſon, with the eaſe he had acquired from the good company he daily mixed with, turned to Captain Overbury, "Will you have the goodneſs, Sir, to invite him? I am too happy a man to wiſh to ſee him; we ought to feel for our friends upon all theſe occaſions. Mrs. Overbury will be ſo kind as to aſſiſt her daughter in receiving him; tell him of my engagement, that he may

may not conceive himſelf ſlighted, and aſſure him of my wiſhes for his proſperity ;" ſo ſaying, he careleſsly, but politely bowed, and went out, Mr. Overbury following him.

" I am wretched," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, " my beloved Elfrida, I am moſt wretched to ſee—"

" Dear Madam," ſaid Elfrida," ſee only what will give you pleaſure; am I not the rich Elfrida? have I not a carriage, a ſet of ſervants; an elegantly furniſhed wardrobe? how then can I be unhappy? the humble young Gentleman, indeed, that ſolicits half an hour's converſation with us, will not be dazzled by what I poſſeſs; but will, I much rather fear, diſcover the true ſtate of the owner's heart. But he muſt come, my dear mother," ſaid ſhe," let it coſt my ſenſibility what it may; the wife of Mr. Elliſon ſhall not ſhew ſhe is not able to wiſh an old acquaintance well, an acquaintance, particularly, who is about to leave the kingdom; you will then be ſo kind, as my huſband mentioned, to aſſiſt me in entertaining him."

" Well, fortify yourſelf my love," ſaid Mrs. Overbury," for my mind tells me your father will bring him to us, his lodging is not far diſtant."

" I have not a thought of him,;' ſaid Elfrida, " that might not be laid naked and open

open before you; but I dread violating the forms of ſociety; my heart was ſo long ignorant of the diſtinctions of wiſdom, caution, or whatever other deviſed rule, that I have ſaid a thouſand things to Mr. Wilmot, which nothing but the innocence of my intention could excuſe; but I bluſh not for the paſt, what innocence ſanctified modeſty cannot condemn, and Mr. Wilmot is well acquainted with the mind which dictated them; all that will be aukward to me is, the kind of behavior I muſt put on; for am I not Mr. Elliſon's wife? You and my father, becauſe I entreated not to marry Mr. Elliſon, ſuppoſed I had a prepoſſeſſion; my friendſhip for Mr. Wilmot, under any other eye, would have conſtituted one of the greateſt happineſſes of my life: the ſevere ſtroke was, being given to the enemy of my deliverer; but if you pleaſe, my dear mother, we will talk no more of it.."

Mrs. Overbury was right in her conjectures; the Lieutenant went immediately to Wilmot's lodgings; he wiſhed the meeting over, and the young man out of the kingdom, perſuading himſelf that change of ſcene would give him tranquillity.

"Come, my boy," ſaid he to Wilmot, "I have promiſed Elfrida and my wife to bring you to tea with them, and I muſt not go without you."

Wilmot

Wilmot was overwhelmed with confuſion; he, however, caught his hat haſtily up, and, walking out, made no reply, and followed the Lieutenant to his lodgings.

Mrs.Overbury and Elfrida roſe to receive him, each holding out a hand to bid him welcome; he kiſſed that of Mrs. Overbury, but only bowed upon Mrs. Elliſon's, and in a hurry to ſpeak the purport of his viſit, he told them he ſhould ſail in a few days.

"You will be kind enough to let us hear from you," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "our friendſhip muſt not be extinguiſhed by diſtance of ſituation; you may meet with many that are better able to promote your advantage in life, but will not find ſincerer hearts towards you than in the preſent company,"

The alternate changes of Wilmot's complexion betrayed the agitation of his mind.

"A letter, Madam," ſaid he to Mrs. Overbury, "from ſuch a friend as you, would be conſidered by me, in India, as an intercourſe with the bleſſed ſpirits of Elyſium; you reconcile me to—to—to my departure from my native country; and who ſhall ſay Edmund Wilmot is an unhappy man, when he enjoys the eſteem of this moſt reſpected circle?"

"But, Madam," ſaid he to Elfrida, "I have a petition to offer, I think you will not deny me; I ſhall once more viſit my father

father (this was a ſudden thought of Wilmot's) and there is an old acquaintance of mine in Arcadia, that would not be diſinclined to make a voyage with me, if you will permit it."

Captain and Mrs. Overbury looked at each other.

"I ſhall be happy, Sir," ſaid Elfrida, "to reſtore your little favorite to you, as my reſidence at Arcadia will be uncertain; and it cannot be in tenderer hands than yours". Pretty creature! I will, my dear Sir," ſaid ſhe, addreſſing the Lieutenant, "tell you the little hiſtory of this bird, when Mr. Wilmot takes leave of us. If it could ſpeak," turning to Wilmot, "you would hear many tales of the leſſons of gratitude I have given it towards you; an obligation, ſuch as a life preſerved, cannot be had in too lively remembrance. I will give orders it ſhall be delivered to you on demand."

"I thank you, Madam," ſaid Wilmot, "I have not now another affair to ſettle;" and, forgetting he was invited to tea, was riſing to go.

"Pray, young Gentleman," ſaid the Lieutenant, "reſume your ſeat; you are not tired of our company, I hope, already; I thought you were to give us the whole afternoon."

Wilmot bowed and ſat down.

Mrs. Elliſon had dreſſed herſelf, though ſuitable to the character of Elliſon's wife, yet in ſuch a manner as leaſt ſet off her figure or features; but poor Wilmot, with all this kindneſs, was unable to be collected; his eyes were evermore upon the door, and he ſeemed to apprehend ſome diſagreeable interruption.

The truth was, he knew not how Elliſon might be diſpoſed to treat him, and he dreaded encountering him, leſt he ſhould not be ſufficiently upon his guard, if he received any trying provocation.

The Lieutenant at length, out of pure compaſſion, ſaid, "Come, Wilmot, you and I will go read the papers."

Wilmot jumped up, bowed, attempted ſucceſsleſsly to ſpeak, bowed again and haſtened out of the parlor.

The Lieutenant, ſeeming not to perceive his diſorder, did all in his power to diſſipate it, but finding he could not recover himſelf, wiſhed him a good night. "Good night," ſaid Wilmot, wringing his hand; "alas! we never meet again."

Hannah, however, having informed herſelf of his lodgings, was with him in the morning before he could ſet off. She wept over him, kiſſed him, and wept again. "Never ſhall I ſee ſuch another young Gentleman," ſaid ſhe, "you are the flower of goodneſs, and the pattern of excellence; I would

would have been content to die myſelf if that could have made you happy."

"My good friend," ſaid Wilmot, "tear not open the half-healed wounds of my heart; the man that has nothing to reproach himſelf with, in the midſt of even cruel diſtreſs, has a firm and conſtant ſupport; we ſhall all meet again, and, I truſt, ſee happier days."

"Ah, mercy upon us," ſaid Hannah, "I wiſh I could think ſo, but thoſe vile Blacks beyond ſea, ſuppoſe they were to poiſon you; ſurely, Mr. Wilmot, if they ſhould, you would not come and terrify one, becauſe one—"

Wilmot ſmiled. "Set your mind at reſt," ſaid he, "Mrs. Jenkins; my ghoſt ſhall not diſturb you; you ſhould be above ſuch idle fears; for if the living were but as harmleſs as the dead, it would be a happy world."

"But for all that," ſaid Hannah, "if I was to ſee any one in a white ſheet, bleeding, and the like of that, I ſhould conclude it was you come to tell me you were murdered; or was I to meet any one by duſk with a bowl in their hand, I ſhould ſwear it was you that had died by poiſon. Well, well, continued Hannah, "it is a folly to talk, but if you are only as proſperous as you are good, you may hold up your head by-and-by with the proudeſt he in the world;

and don't be caſt down, Mr. Wilmot, for God is above the devil yet, and there is no knowing who may live or who may die; and many a fair lady has had the man for her ſecond huſband, ſhe could not get for her firſt; and—"

Wilmot interrupted her. "It is all over with me, my dear Mrs. Jenkins, I cannot hear you talk thus; where Miſs Overbury was concerned it was quite different, but Mrs. Elliſon is too ſacred a character to be mentioned lightly; but leave me, Mrs. Jenkins, we muſt part."

Hannah burſt again into tears, knelt down to bleſs him, and he was compelled to break from her, and leave her to recover herſelf how ſhe could, ſetting off immediately for Arcadia, where his chief and almoſt only buſineſs was the pigeon, for his family did not require a perſonal adieu.

Elfrida perceived Hannah had been weeping, her heart told her the cauſe, and ſhe ſtudiouſly avoided every word that might lead to an avowal of it; but Elliſon, who let no opportunity eſcape him of tormenting, ſaid, "What then your favorite is gone, for ever gone, Mrs. Jenkins, (affecting to lament) and you are ſo kind as to whimper and to whine?"

"Aye, aye," ſaid Hannah, "a hard heart, as the world goes, is a great bleſſing, but thoſe who feel not the ſorrows of others will

will find themſelves, when their diſtreſsful hour comes, without pity."

"Has your Jenkins meaning, Elfrida, in what ſhe ſays," demanded Elliſon, with an air of indolence, "does ſhe, think you, ſet up for a ſmall prophet, and, ſcreech-owl like, attempt to warn me of the evil to come; or is it merely the overflowings of her fondneſs for the Arcadian youth, ſo unhappily driven, by diſappointed love, from his native land?"

Captain Overbury preſented himſelf, and never more ſeaſonably, for Elfrida was tortured by her huſband's humor, and wholly at a loſs for a reply.

She inſtantly took alarm at her father's turn of countenance, "What has happened, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "my dear mother—"

"Is well, my love;" ſaid the Lieutenant.

"Wilmot," ſaid Elliſon, I hope *our* Wilmot has not acted the part of the infatuated Werter, and—"

The Lieutenant looked angry; "No, Sir," ſaid he, "Mr. Wilmot's conduct has uniformly been that of a man of honor, a gentleman, and, though it may perhaps ſhock a refined ear, a Chriſtian; I ſee by your caſt of features, Sir, you are ready with a ſmart reply, but I have news for you that requires your moſt ſerious attention. Elfrida, my love, Mrs. Elliſon is no more;" Elfrida was

ſhocked, and Mr. Elliſon looked grave; "and, young Gentleman," ſaid the Lieutenant, "you have now but one father." Elliſon ſtared.

"Explain yourſelf, dear Sir," ſaid Elfrida, "tell us all."

"Mr. and Mrs. Elliſon were loſt," ſaid the Lieutenant, "in croſſing the ferry, by ſome unfortunate accident, on their return home, and you are now ſole maſter of yourſelf and fortune."

Elfrida ſhed tears of compaſſion for the fate of a woman, who had nevertheleſs been the worſt foe to her peace, and Elliſon pretended to walk the room in great diſcompoſure; but the words, you are now maſter of yourſelf and fortune, had ſtruck him, and he enjoyed more pleaſure from them, than he felt grief at the dreadful cataſtrophe.

Hannah bellowed at the news, telling Mrs. Elliſon "ſhe would never ſleep in the dark again, if ſhe went without her dinner to buy a candle; for why, ſhe ſhould expect to ſee them drawing her curtains. But only think, Madam," continued ſhe, "how Providence orders things; this couple thought they had done for themſelves for ever, when they had forced you to marry, and behold that very marriage has coſt them their lives, as one may ſay, for no other buſineſs would have drawn them, at this ſeaſon of the year, acroſs the ferry. Well, well,

well, it is wonderful to ſee how good comes out of evil, and evil out of good, from one end of our days to the other."

Wilmot's mind was deranged by this melancholy incident; had it pleaſed Heaven to have taken them ſooner; he, however, reprobated the idea, took his pigeon under his care, which Elliſon had been ſo malicious, only becauſe it was his gift, and beloved by Elfrida, to turn out to famine or diſaſter, about five minutes before he left Arcadia, accompanied by his bride. Chance reſtored it, however, to his protection, and having ſettled the conſequences of a little adventure he met with, when in purſuit of the loſt bird, the particulars of which will in due time and place be laid before our readers, he departed for India.

A PROVOCATION.

It was now debated in full council how Elliſon ſhould proceed, but the diſſipations of London, and the pleaſures of high life, having taken faſt hold of his mind, he beſought the Lieutenant and his wife to go down to Arcadia, and ſettle all his affairs. "Do, ſo," ſaid Elfrida, "my dear father, if you have no very particular objection, for it would be a diſtreſſing ſcene to me now."

Elliſon looked at her ſignificantly, and if he had not been reſtrained by the Lieutenant's preſence, would have mentioned Wilmot's name, notwithſtanding, in his ſituation, decency required that his wit ſhould be unexerciſed.

The Lieutenant having turned the proſpect in his mind, felt himſelf very much inclined to give into it; "It will," ſaid he, "perhaps, remind the owner of that ſeat, of a man he once profeſſed to love, and of a child that never offended him; and who knows the benefits ſuch a *memento* may lead to?"

Mrs. Overbury was ſorry to part from her Elfrida, but as Elliſon promiſed to follow them in a few weeks, they ſet off and ſoon reached their deſtined ſpot.

Their firſt care was to ſee the remains of the unfortunate Mr. and Mrs. Elliſon properly interred; their next to write an account of it to Mr. Cluwyd, with an offer of occupying or giving up the family-ſeat, as was moſt agreeable to his choice; and then to endeavor to make themſelves as comfortable as they could be without their Elfrida's company.

The gardens and the park were quite new to them, for the former, as hath been repeatedly mentioned, were laid out according to the whimſical taſte of their temporary owner, in the paſtoral ſtile, as ſhe called it,

and

and the latter was cut up into knick-knacks, as Hannah phraſed it.

They found Parſon Wilmot a very agreeable neighbor, and his wife a moſt worthy, though not brilliant woman; and, except the abſence of their Elfrida, their tender concern for the fugitive Wilmot, and the uncertainty of what notice Mr. Cluwyd would deign to honor them with, they were quite happy.

Elliſon, now free from reſtraint, ſet off with *eclat*, his wife had a black chair with three ſervants, in mourning, for her particular uſe; and he had his hunters, his ſtud, but above all the reſt, from a paſſion he contracted for gaming, ſeemed to be in haſte to run his race.

Elfrida was unconcerned for the future, and unintereſted by the preſent; a life of parade fatigued and mortified her, and the worſt ill that threatened her was the loſs of accommodations, which ſhe could not regret, becauſe ſhe could not enjoy.

Her ſpirits were ſomewhat relieved at the muſical aſſemblies; ſhe felt herſelf at the fountain-head of harmony, and gave into many of theſe parties with ſome promiſe of amuſement, and ſhe even perſuaded herſelf ſhe had forgot Wilmot.

About three months after Mr. and Mrs. Elliſon's death, ſhe was ſurprized by the unexpected company of her huſband at dinner,

who had left her with the declaration of being engaged for the day.

He was kind to exceſs; called her an angel; "You have," ſaid he, "Elfrida, as Mrs. Brookes expreſſes it, the ſoul as well as the outward form of beauty, I never yet beheld ſo intelligent a face, and then your mind;" continued he, "How little do I appear in my own eyes, when I contemplate your mind; if ever woman upon earth deſerved to be happy, you are the woman; and yet, my love, happineſs is denied you; the huſband of your *obedience* has not requiſites to make you happy; his affection for you is wild, irregular, violent, while all the movements of your ſoul are gentle, correct, rational. O how unequal an union."

Elfrida was alarmed; "What, Mr. Elliſon," ſaid ſhe, "can have ſuggeſted theſe reflections; my heart you cannot ſee, but I think my conduct ſpeaks you not unkindly. I am not of a turn to profeſs much, and, though my ſincerity may be a blemiſh in the world's eye, I think my huſband cannot be much hurt by it."

"By heaven," ſaid Elliſon, "I meant not to complain; even my moſt private thoughts approve you; you are only too good, Elfrida, and I the unfortunate contraſt to your merits."

"There is ſomething ſo unuſual," ſaid Elfrida, "ſo—you will pardon me, unneceſſary

ceſſary in this ſelf-accuſation, and I own it ſtartles me; if it is intended as an introduction to what you may conceive a mortifying piece of information, ſpare yourſelf, Sir, and come immediately to the point; life is full of viciſſitudes, and we are now launched upon that great ocean, and muſt expect to be tempeſt-beaten."

"In three words then," ſaid Elliſon, "I am undone, my connexions broken, my fame blaſted, my proviſion gone, unleſs you could conſent—"

"Name your wiſhes," ſaid Elfrida, "and be aſſured I will accompliſh them; your partiality for me has, I am well aſſured, run you into great expence; tell me how I ſhall contract myſelf, how retrieve your affectionate error, and you ſhall find me quick to ſave."

Elliſon's heart was honeſtly touched for the moment; "This goodneſs, Elfrida—ſuch a wife to the man you did not chooſe. What, what injury has not been done to him that would have been your choice; I ſpeak not now from narrow ſentiments, or ill-natured ſuggeſtion, but generouſly, candidly, Elfrida, for moſt happy would he have been that could have obtained you; I will ſay, of yourſelf—"

"Human nature," ſaid Elfrida, "is imperfect, therefore, of courſe, human happineſs; the great difference between us, Mr. Elliſon,

Elliſon, I conceive to be our ſex, for does not Addiſon ſay, there is a ſex in the ſoul? I am ſomething ſofter I believe than you, and could ſupport a ſtroke of misfortune, that affected only myſelf, with more reſolution; but to buſineſs, if you pleaſe; tell me wherein I have the power to ſerve you."

"By robbing, by diſinheriting yourſelf," ſaid Elliſon, "I have, I will not conceal it, encumbered my eſtate, but the ſale of one part would redeem the other."

"Sell it then," ſaid ſhe, "it demands not a moment's deliberation."

"But," returned Elliſon, "your couſin had your advantage ſo much at heart, that I am bound down to the hardeſt terms—"

"From which, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Mrs. Elliſon, "I can releaſe you; make no delay then; I will meet your purpoſe, not only half way, but to its fulleſt completion; your cares that reſt upon my power to remove, ſhall all be done away."

Elliſon was frantic with ſurprize and joy, and left her to acquaint his right honorable friend of her ready concurrence; nor did ſhe fail to attend him to the Court of King's-Bench, which was then ſitting, to alienate her dower, and enable him to do as he pleaſed with his whole eſtate; and, this point ſettled, we will, my Elfrida, ſaid Elliſon, a viſit to the country.

The

The buſineſs, through all its combinations, was ſoon diſpatched; and Elliſon, to give himſelf a ſhort breathing-time, ordered a carriage to the door the next morning, and, accompanied by his wife and Mrs. Jenkins, who, from the viſible change in his behavior, thought he was growing quite good, bid adieu to London.

But to the great felicity of Elfrida, inſtead of Arcadia-houſe, which ſhe trembled at the thoughts of entering, the Lieutenant had fitted up the Grange-hall for their reception; Mrs. Cluwyd having written, in her huſband's name, that they ſhould be glad to have Cluwyd-park, alias Arcadia, vacated; as they would either occupy the premiſes themſelves, or provide a new tenant; and this without one word of recognition of the Lieutenant or his wife, and thus all his hopes reſpecting Mr. Cluwyd's awakened kindneſs fell to the ground.

Elliſon looked ſurprized, nay diſpleaſed, at the change; "Was this neceſſary, my dear Sir," ſaid he.

"Why, you will pardon me, young Gentleman," ſaid the Lieutenant, "but Arcadia ſeemed to me a weight you could very well diſpenſe with, as a town-reſidence is ſo much to your taſte."

Elfrida mentioned not, even to her mother, the ſtep ſhe had taken reſpecting her jointure, but portioning out her time, devoted a large ſhare

ſhare of it to her pencil. "It was never intended, my dear Madam," ſaid ſhe, "that we ſhould live in idleneſs; and the body's exerciſe is the mind's health; this is a piece of philoſophy I learned from Hannah, at a time when ſhe appeared to me an oracle, do not then deny me the pleaſure of being employed."

Mr. Overbury and Elliſon ſpent their time in reading, ſuperintending the improvements which the Captain had planned, and at back-gammon; and Mrs. Elliſon walked, read, and worked with her mother. Mr. Wilmot ſometimes called upon them; but Elliſon ſhewing a ſtrong diſinclination to viſiting him, they were ſcarcely upon ſpeaking terms, and for weeks had no other neighbor.

At length it was announced that Cluwyd-park was going to be inhabited, and this report was ſoon followed by the arrival of Sir Walter Stephens (Mrs. Overbury's old lover) and his young wife, whom he begged leave to introduce at the Grange; and beſpoke a friendly intercourſe; "We were rivals once, Captain," ſaid he, "but thoſe days are ſo long ſince paſſed, I hope we ſhall now be upon a ſocial footing" The Captain profeſſed himſelf deſirous to live in good neighborhood, and Mrs. Elliſon's mind felt neither pleaſure nor pain from the incident.

Lady

Lady Stephens was in every ſenſe of the word, a fine lady, fond of admiration, fond of frolic, and incapable of exiſting one moment without cards.

"Bleſs me," ſaid Mrs. Elliſon, "does this woman remember ſhe is a rational being, to be thus *dying*, as Dr. Young calls it, of a *rage* to *live*. I am certain ſhe and I ſhall not be much attached to each other."

Lady Stephens was quite diverted with the *naivete* of her young acquaintance, and promiſed to open a new world upon her knowledge. "Who, my dear miſtaken Madam, beſide yourſelf," aſked ſhe, "in this age, looks for happineſs in the dull *routine* of family connexions? You ſhall be my pupil, and I will teach you what polite life is; I have all my good leſſons ready for you in my library."

Elfrida was aſtoniſhed to find herſelf furniſhed with books as books of entertainment, that were only ſo many frightful portraits of human nature; men and women of ſpirit and *ton*, as it is called, were, in her opinion, only ſo many monſters in creation, deſtroying and deſtroyed by turns; and ſhe could not forbear exclaiming, in the language of Juba, if knowledge of the world makes men perfidious, may Ella ever live in ignorance.

She

She now, however, no longer wondered at all the phænomena, as they appeared to her in her days of innocence; of fetters and chains upon the manners and expreſſions of the individual, or at the clamorous diſtinction of ſex, which had ſo much diſturbed her in Arcadia. "If male and female intercourſe is merely," ſaid ſhe, "a ſcene of licentiouſneſs and deceit; if, inſtead of being the brothers and friends of each other, they are the actual deceivers and betrayers, then indeed was it good policy to keep them at a diſtance, and give them unfavorable and apprehenſive impreſſions of what is ſtiled love, but this is not nature, as Wilmot's heart and mine can bear teſtimony, it is the wicked art of a falſe and unfortunate education, and the baneful effect of unworthy example. Where piety is unknown, vice will dare to ſhew its head, and faſhion authorize what principle muſt condemn; it is too late for me, however, to fear the infection, I will nevertheleſs ſhun it; it is good to be guarded at all points, where there is a poſſibility of aſſault, and the beſt ſecurity of a woman is, always, retreat."

Lady Stephens deſpiſed her neighbor from her heart, but was ſo well bred as to cover the ſovereign contempt ſhe entertained for her narrow and abſurd notions, under a profuſion of careſſes; the beauty of Elfrida's form, though faded, was frequently her topic;

pic; "If ſhe did but know her own powers," ſhe would ſay, "what glorious miſchief ſhe might do; but ſhe is both inanimate and incorrigible; I am not ſo blind but I can ſee what nature has done for her; ſhe might ſit for a Venus; and her underſtanding is brilliant, but the ſentiments of her heart are home-ſpun, formal, vulgar; we may exalt the *goddeſs* of *propriety* as high as we pleaſe, and raiſe her a thouſand altars, but *fancy*, the playful, the variable, I had almoſt ſaid the fantaſtic, deity for me; but Mrs. Elliſon is the counterpart of her mother, and this is what young women get by their duty and their filial regard, and their humdrum nonſenſe, to be unfitted for human ſociety."

"Why do you not inſpire her," ſaid Sir Walter.

"I have done my beſt," replied the lady, "but ſhe is a *non-electric* body, and the torch of Prometheus himſelf could not vivify her."

Lady Stephens by way of doing ſomething to chaſe the *monſter ennui* (as Mrs. Brookes happily phraſes the weariſomeneſs of leiſure) coquetted with Elliſon, "I proteſt," ſaid ſhe, "you are a fine fellow thrown away; what a different order of beings we are, who touch the tropics, to you who freeze under the poles; how do you paſs your evenings at the Grange?"

"Come,"

"Come," ſaid Elliſon, pleaſantly enough, "you ſhall not rally me out of my happineſs; ſuch a wife as Elfrida cannot be a diſagreeable companion; ſhe plays elegantly, and ſings enchantingly; I am not afraid of raiſing your expectations too high, for you can have no notion what a daughter of harmony ſhe is; but you ſhall hear her and judge for yourſelf; and then in the country, where one hopes for nothing beyond living *a le barbone*, it muſt be a very pleaſing ſurprize to find one's ſelf in Elyſium."

"I grant, I grant you," ſaid her ladyſhip, "very well hit off indeed, for your friends are ſo formal and ſo gentle, and ſo pious, and ſo plaintive, that the old ferry-boat was never better freighted, or the Elyſian fields better peopled by any of Charon's labors. I adopt the idea, and will henceforth call your Grange, the imperial territories of Pluto, your canal Lethe, your *cara ſpoſa* Antigone, your father Ulyſſes, your mother Penelope, and yourſelf the blooming Telemachus; but, you wicked wretch, do not take it into your head to prefer the character of the Trojan general, miſtake me for Dido, and attempt to allure me into any of your really well enough receſſes."

Here a general laugh of Elliſon, Sir Walter, and her Ladyſhip, filled up a pauſe, that furniſhed the female orator with new images.

"Or,

"Or, now I think of it," ſaid ſhe, "Mrs. Elliſon is a pretty imitation of *Eve*; her taſte for flowers, the extreme neatneſs of her favorite parterre; and then her walking forth at morn, ſo like our common mother, to prune her tender plants, clip their exuberance, and all thoſe pretty *&c.* as we have them from Milton's pen; with that divine compliment, I own not intolerably ill applied, Grace in her ſteps, heaven in her eye, in every geſture dignity and love. In ſhort, Elliſon, I will always acknowledge her to be the fineſt piece of ſtill life I ever beheld."

Such was Lady Stephens' rhapſodical converſation; and ſhe would frequently conclude with the queſtion, "Will you dare go to town with us without her, and ſee what a pretty fellow we will ſoon make of you? your *air* is not at preſent *faſhion*, your *look nonchalance*, or your *language ton*."

Mrs. Elliſon and Mrs. Overbury walked over to the lodge, having been told Hannah was ſuddenly taken ill, but it was no more than a violent head-ach, to which ſhe was often ſubject.

They came quite unexpectedly, and found her at breakfaſt, with a boy about three years old ſtanding by her, and a little girl about two ſeated in her lap, to whom, in *her way*, ſhe was teaching good-manners. "And if," ſaid ſhe, as they approached the door unperceived

unperceived by her, "the good ladies at the Grange ſhould ever happen to take notice of you, be ſure make your beſt curtſy, and you your beſt bow; and bleſſed will be the day if you can obtain their favor and friendſhip."

The Ladies entered the room. "We are glad to find you ſo well," ſaid Mrs. Overbury (Hannah was now ſettled in a lodge that belonged to the Grange) "and in ſuch good company; how came you by theſe little folks? are they nurſe children?"

"Yes, Madam," replied Hannah' "and orphans; poor ſouls, their mother died of a broken heart, and the pariſh officers were going to ſeize them and their little effects, and ſo they were preſerved, and they now live with me; and the boy is to have notions put into his head about going to ſea, and the girl is to be brought up comfortably, without pride, and well-taken care of, without ſuperfluity, and I am to teach her all I know (which, God help me, is little enough) until—until—But what a creature am I to run on at this rate, without aſking you to ſit down, or to do me the honor to eat a few ſtrawberries of my own planting," and away ſhe ran to fetch them, without waiting a reply.

Mrs. Overbury and Elfrida looked at each other, and then at the children; "Pretty innocents, ſweet prattlers, you ſhall come to the

the Grange," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "and we will be acquainted."

"But I like this one beſt," ſaid the boy, "ſhe ſhall be my mamma; ſiſter may take you." Elfrida kiſſed him.

"What fine hair the little rogue has got," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "why you are buried alive, my dear, in the exuberance of your own locks. Put them on their beſt cloaths, Mrs. Jenkins, and ſend them up to us in the afternoon, they will greatly entertain us."

"Who can theſe children be?" ſaid Mrs. Overbury, as they returned home, "Hannah, by an artleſs *manœuvre*, I perceived evaded our enquiries. Orphans ſhe ſays they are, and ſnatched by ſome happy chance from the hands of pariſh officers; but wherefore ſhould we wiſh to enquire into this matter; they are innocent, let their origin be as unfortunate as it may, and their innocence will amuſe us, whilſt we in return may render ourſelves ſerviceable to them."

"We have made a new acquaintance," ſaid Mrs. Overbury to her huſband and Elliſon, "in our morning's walk, and have engaged them to tea."

"I am ſorry for it," ſaid Elliſon, "for Lady Stephens will be here, and we muſt not hope to find any thing ſuited to the delicacy of her taſte, at this diſtance from the metropolis."

"If

"If innocence and infancy can charm her," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "we can give her a high feaſt."

"Infants, my dear Madam!" ſaid Elliſon, "I believe ſhe will think with me, that the nurſery is the beſt place for children."

"Unleſs we have your permiſſion, Sir," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, hurt by his manner of replying, "to let them run upon the lawn, ſince you have objections to their company in Mr. Overbury's ſtudy."

"I don't love to ſee children, Madam," ſaid Elliſon, "it is ſo like the Arcadia I was brought up in, unleſs I was ſo happy, indeed, to have a young family of my own."

"You both diſappoint and mortify me," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "but we will forbid their company; we ſhall have too many afternoons we can call our own, to offend you by our viſitants, or your polite gueſt."

"I will not remain long under his roof," ſaid the Lieutenant, "he has not a mind I can owe the ſhadow of an obligation to; and, as the world cannot know the ſervices I have done him, in the improvement of his fortune, I ſhall be ſet down by-and-by for a dependent upon his bounty. Overbury, in his old age, muſt not ſink into ſuch diſgrace."

The bell rang at the gate; it was a ſervant from Sir Walter's; her Ladyſhip was a little indiſpoſed,

indiſpoſed, and *therefore* diſinclined to come out, and begged the engagement might be reverſed.

"We will be excuſed, ſaid Mr. Overbury; "Elfrida, no doubt, will attend Mr. Eliſon." Elfrida ſaw it was impoſſible, without declaring an averſion to their high-bred neighbors, to decline, and therefore retired to dreſs.

Hannah, having received no prohibition, entered the Grange-park, with a child in each hand, ſet off to the beſt advantage; but nature had done her part ſo completely, that drapery concealed many, without giving them one additional beauty.

Mrs. Overbury received them with the utmoſt kindneſs; but the boy was ſhy, and looked about as if he miſſed ſomebody; at length, "but where is t'other," ſaid he, "for I likes her beſt?"

The Lieutenant called him to him, and aſked if he would be a ſoldier; the boy, ſtruck with his countenance, began, without reply, to climb up his knee, when helping him, he whiſpered in the Lieutenant's ear, "I will be what you be."

"Then, Mrs. Jenkins," ſaid Mr. Overbury, "we have got a little ſoldier; he muſt drink his Majeſty's health, upon devoting himſelf to his ſervice. Here my little fellow, what will you do with theſe two pieces of

of white money?" holding out two half-crowns to him.

"Do with them," ſaid the boy, "why give them mamma to buy bread, for her, ſiſter and daddy."

"Had you not better keep them for yourſelf?" ſaid the Lieutenant.

"What," returned the boy, "when ſhe "gives me all!"

"Gratitude! Infant gratitude!" ſaid the Lieutenant, "how amiable! O what have thoſe to anſwer for that could corrupt ſuch a heart as that."

Elliſon, paſſing the ſtudy-window, was piqued to ſee theſe unknown little ones ſo abundantly careſſed; he ſtopped and looked in; "I proteſt," ſaid he, ſmiling maliciouſly, "they are like Wilmot; who knows but he may have thus multiplied the human face divine, for the good of his country?

Hannah colored up. "They are no more Mr. Wilmot's than they are yours," ſaid ſhe, "nay, God forgive every one their ſins—not ſo much, if the truth was known."

Elliſon laughed and walked on.

"I think that man," ſaid Hannah, "has the cruelleſt heart I ever knew in my born days."

The Lieutenant ſmiled. "You ſurely Mrs. Jenkins, forget Mr. Elliſon is my ſon, and Elfrida's huſband."

"No

"No, no, Sir," ſaid Hannah, "I remember it but too well; and, ſince I muſt ſpeak out, the children are—"

"Hold," ſaid Mrs. Elliſon, who was wiſhing her father and mother a good afternoon; "we have no deſire to pry into ſecrets; they are lovely children, and they are parentleſs; and as ſuch, deſerve the countenance of benevolence."

"He ſhan't be my daddy," ſaid the boy, "that looks croſs; I don't like en—wont love en—love you," throwing his arms about Mr. Overbury's neck."

"Dear child," ſaid the Lieutenant, "your genuine careſſes go to my heart, and from this moment I will never forſake you."

"And will you love me?" ſaid the boy, "and get ſhe to love me," pointing to Elfrida.

Mrs. Elliſon followed her huſband, who, with a leſs favorable brow than ſhe had ever encountered, handed her into her carriage.

He was ſullenly ſilent.

Elfrida, for the innocent childrens' ſake was alarmed; "You ſeem diſpleaſed," ſaid ſhe.

"I am provoked, Madam, to ſee the departure from character Mr. Overbury can be guilty of; careſſing beggars' brats, and the offspring, perhaps, of infamy."

" The children muſt be innocent," ſaid Elfrida.

" Very well, Madam, I could expect no leſs from you, than a ſimilitude of ſentiment; there is a ſtrong *family likeneſs* in the *minds* of all the Overburys."

" For heaven's ſake, my good Mr. Elliſon," ſaid Elfrida, " do not declare war againſt the moſt humane feelings upon earth; my father, at preſent, reſpects you, my mother remembers you are her ſon; you can give happineſs, you can deſtroy it; for my peace ſake, at leaſt, ſpare the minds of thoſe I love."

" What a pathos," returned Elliſon, " faith, Elfrida, it is a loſs to the public that you was not obliged to tread the ſtage; what tearful eyes would you have cauſed! but, my deareſt life, why plant this forcible artillery againſt a heart that is already your own--unfortified—un—-But what *triſteſſe* (laughing at the anxious turn of Elfrida's countenance) as Lady Stephens ſays, you would be one of the lovelieſt women in creation, if you could but forget your paſtoral education, and look and think like the polite world."

The coach now ſtopped at Sir Walter's door, and relieved Mrs. Elliſon from the neceſſity of a reply.

Her ladyſhip ſlightly aſked for the Lieutenant and Mrs. Overbury, but appeared as

as if their non-acceptance of her invitation did not diſpleaſe her; and muſic and wit filled up the evening.

AN HISTORY.

Mr. Overbury took a ride after tea, leaving Mrs. Overbury, Hannah, and the happy children together, when the good lady could not ſuppreſs a deſire of hearing more of the boy and girl, who, from Hannah's manner and expreſſion, ſhe was led to ſuſpect, either directly or indirectly, had ſome relation to Elliſon.

Hannah was very ready to communicate all ſhe knew, unconditionally, but Mrs. Overbury aſſured her ſhe ſhould think it her duty to keep the ſecret, ſhe had proved herſelf capable of ſeducing her to reveal.

But beſides the natural wiſh of coming at the knowledge of what might be a family concern, Mrs. Overbury was apprehenſive, that from the goodneſs and openneſs of Hannah's heart, ſhe was very unequal to an important truſt, unſupported and unregulated by ſome better-informed individual.

"Turn the children out upon the lawn, then Madam," ſaid ſhe, "for that boy catches at every thing, and the artful can put together what the innocent disjoint; and

their melancholy ſtory muſt not get wind in the country."

"Mr. Wilmot," Mrs. Overbury ſtarted, "nay, Madam, you will have no reaſon to be aſhamed of what he has done in the affair, for thus it was that Richard told me it all happened.

"Mr. Wilmot, you know, Madam, travelled all the way down to Arcadia, to get the pigeon he had given his young lady, (now, the more's the pity, Mrs. Elliſon) when quite a boy; and, could you believe ſuch a thing, out of downright hatred and malice, Elliſon had ſlyly turned it out to a wide world, before he ſet off for London, after being made Miſs Ella's huſband, which was the moſt *un*human and baſeſt thing that ever was heard of; but Mrs. Elliſon knows it not, nor ever ſhall from me, for it would break her heart.

"Well, what does poor dear Mr. Wilmot do, but ſet off to every village, and offer every villager a reward to tell him where he could find it; when lo and behold, he was directed to a place, about ſix miles off, where he was told he ſhould hear tale or tidings of it.

"Paſſing by a lonely hovel, in full queſt of the loſt bird, what ſhould he ſee but two or three people running in and out, and, ſhe is dying, ſhe muſt die, the general word amongſt them.

"This

" This was enough; the pigeon was neglected for a moment, for his tender heart did not ſuffer him to go by the door of the poor and dying, without aſking if he could be ſerviceable.

" The boy (a comical fellow, as you ſee him, Madam) taken with his dreſs, I ſuppoſe, got hold of him, and drew him, not only into the hovel, but to the bedſide, ſaying mamma, mamma, O mamma.

" There was ſomething ſo touching Mr. Wilmot told Richard, in the child's manner of endeavoring to intereſt him for his mother, that he ſat down by the bed, and, good ſoul (methinks I ſee him) lifted the child upon his lap, who kiſſed him, then kiſſed his mamma, wiping the tears from her face with his own little hand, and pulled Wilmot to kiſs her alſo; ſhe appeared quite young, and was juſt recovered from a fainting fit.

" She looked upon him with her dim eyes, Will you have the goodneſs, Sir, to hear me, ſaid ſhe, you ſeem ſent like an angel from heaven to cloſe my life; will you, Sir, vouchſafe to hear me, but we muſt be alone."

" Aye, aye, ſaid an old woman, and a youngiſh one, we will ſtep to the outſide of the door, and may be, Sir, ſhe will tell you who the children belong to, though ſhe will not tell us; howſoever we have ſent for

the pariſh-officers to come and take care of them.

" Mr. Wilmot beckoned them to retire, and as the dying poor creature's voice was ſo weak he could ſcarcely hear it, he would have put the boy down, that he might have ſtooped his ear to make it eaſier for both; but I warrant you no, Providence put it into his heart, Madam, to cling about Mr. Wilmot, and mamma, mamma, O mamma, was all they could get out of him.

" I am departing, ſaid the young woman, but fear I ſhall be diſturbed, in my laſt moments, by cruel queſtions; there is no protection for me, I broke the laws, and theſe infants have not a friend or relation upon earth—the pariſh-officers—

" Fear them not," ſaid Mr. Wilmot,—

" Ah, Madam," ſighed Hannah, " but I ſhall ſay no more; could he have been your Wilmot, he had not been now plowing the rough ſeas, and perhaps, at laſt, ſwallowed up by them. I am ſure I never wake in the night, without trembling, for fear he ſhould come to tell me he is drowned."

" But you forget your ſtory, Hannah," ſaid Mrs. Overbury.

" I forget every thing," ſaid Hannah, " when I am ſet in to talk of that ſweet Gentleman; for I love him as if he was my own ſon; and wherever he comes he makes a heaven

a heaven upon earth; none of your proud looks, or your ſcornful ſmiles, or your ſullen fits."

"My good Hannah," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "leave your picture unfiniſhed, and return to the children."

"Aye, Madam, I hope you don't underſtand me; yet no matter if you did, for I ſpeak the truth, and have, moreover, great reaſon—but to my ſtory.

"Fear them not, ſaid Mr. Wilmot, they ſhall not enter this place; I will give them a ſatisfactory anſwer.

"And my dying bleſſing, ſaid the young woman, ſhall reward you. I am the daughter of a hard-working man, at the far ſide of this country, where I lived without guile, though I am left to die covered with ſhame, and ſhall, I ſuppoſe, be denied Chriſtian burial.

"Compoſe your mind, ſaid Mr. Wilmot, I will, both living and dead, protect you.

"I was ſeen by a young Gentleman, ſaid the poor ſick girl, of fortune; he was not eighteen, and I was only fifteen; he made honeſt love to me, for marriage was all his propoſal; but he told us that wedlock would not be lawful, if we even went to church, before he was one-and-twenty; nor then, either, without his parents' conſent, which he had little hope to obtain;

but that there was ſuch a thing as marrying in the ſight of God, which he was ready to do, that no one might part us; and ſo my father, whoſe induſtry was our chief ſupport, dying, my mother, who had been a lady's maid in her youth, and was very helpleſs, as to work, and ſeemed to underſtand what he meant, was over-perſuaded by him to accept his offer; and ſo I have lived theſe four years, in this place, but not in this hovel till ſince my mother's death, who was taken off by the ſmall-pox, juſt when the father of theſe children, which, Heaven knows, I thought my conſtant huſband, married and forſook me, and I have been going off with a broken-heart ever ſince, and my ſweet lambs—

Here a ſhout of the women, of "they are coming, threw the poor young creature into ſo ſevere a fainting fit, that ſhe had like never to have told to whom the children belonged.

"Mr. Wilmot called in the women to help her, and, with the little boy in his hand, met the gruff church-wardens at the door. I know your buſineſs, Gentlemen, ſaid he, but you may return in peace, the children ſhall not become chargeable to the pariſh; I will remove them if their mother dies, and have them taken care of."

"Has the huſſy told you who is their father?"

ther?" ſaid a great boiſterous woman, that had had three huſbands.

"Curioſity, ſaid Wilmot, muſt not, to gratify itſelf, diſtreſs the dying; if ſhe recovers the fit, the arrival of theſe Gentlemen has thrown her into, I believe ſhe will reveal every thing, but if ſhe is again hurried, the power of ſpeech will moſt certainly be denied her.

"We will repair, ſaid the officers, to the cat and bagpipes, and wait the end of it.

"Do, Gentlemen, ſaid Mr. Wilmot; and if half-a-guinea will be acceptable, to bear your expences, it is much at your ſervice.

"And yet, Madam, you wonder when I ſtop my ſtory, to praiſe ſuch a man, or to lament that he is gone from England.

"The church-wardens walked off," continued Hannah, "well pleaſed I warrant you; and the young woman being come to herſelf, he again took his ſeat at her bedſide, and the women again retired.

"Where is this hard-hearted man? ſaid Mr. Wilmot.

"In London, with his lady, replied the poor girl; rioting in wealth, without once remembering that we had not bread to eat.

"And how came he to forſake his children? demanded Mr. Wilmot.

"He would have provided for the boy, replied ſhe, and enabled me to take care of

the girl, but it was a life of wickedneſs, and I ſcorned it, nor once, ſince his marriage, would I ſuffer him to viſit me; and ſo, to puniſh my pride and obſtinacy, as he called it, he left me to periſh, and reduced me to the neceſſity of walking the high road, with the children in my arms, to beg; and out of my little ſavings I have ſubſiſted till now, that I have given out my laſt penny; and my few neighbors were kind to me ſo long as my money laſted, but as ſoon as they found me deſtitute, called me ſtrumpet, and the moſt ſhocking names, from which ſtate of bitterneſs you have delivered me.

" And what is the name of this monſter in a human ſhape? ſaid Wilmot."

" Elliſon, replied the poor dying girl; the name went, he told Richard, like a piſtol to his heart.

" Never utter it more, ſaid he, my poor unfortunate one, never utter it more. I know the man, but his wife is an angel, and muſt never diſcover how much he deſerves to be deſpiſed. I will leave you to provide a place for the children and will return immediately; in the mean time here is money to buy you favor in the ſight of theſe happy beings, your neighbors; who, having never tranſgreſſed, know not how to pity thoſe that have; but die in peace, for heaven will accept the heart.

" Well,

"Well, Madam," ſaid Hannah, "away comes Mr. Wilmot to my Richard, and tells him of two orphan children he was reſolved to take care of, and, dear ſoul, was quite ſhy of truſting him with any more of the buſineſs; ſo back he goes with Richard, telling him as he went, what he could do, and what he could not do, ſeeing he was obliged to go a board, and have his neceſſaries about him.

"But, ſaid he, I have a watch, Richard, a ſilver cup, and a few ſuch things as will make you about twenty pounds, and you muſt do the reſt till my return, when I will heap bleſſings upon your head; nor will your charity go unrewarded.

"But, Richard, ſaid he, if I was to die, ſomething muſt be done to gain theſe helpleſs innocents a new friend. Mr. Overbury is the man, of all others upon earth; but I am afraid if Mr. Elliſon, (think of that, Madam, ſaid Hannah, to be able to call him *Mr.* Elliſon at *ſuch* a time, but he can do every thing that is good) if Mr. Elliſon ſhould die, indeed, ſaid he—But it will not do—we muſt look ſome other way—to Mrs. Overbury, in caſe of my death, they ſhall be intruſted; and that you, my honeſt, kind, Mr. Jenkins, may be no loſer; in all events, whatever I leave behind, ſhall, under Mrs. Overbury's management, be theirs; and the world may judge as it pleaſes, and

condemn

condemn me; my memory will be embalmed by her eſteem, and my motives regiſtered on high."

"Bleſſed heavens," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "and you have this letter for me."

"O yes, Madam, but you ſhall hear.

"This brought them to the cottage, where Mr. Wilmot expected to find the young woman dead; but lo and behold, they had got her ſome cordial and ſome food, and ſhe had fallen aſleep, and was quite revived, for two-thirds of her ſickneſs was famine; and Mr. Wilmot bid Richard take the children home with him; he will be a father to them, ſaid he, for he has a tender mind, and he has a wife, a worthy woman (you muſt think, Madam, that I cannot forbear being proud of his praiſes) that will be a mother to them, and they will be happy.

"The poor young woman was ready to faint with wonder and gratitude; ſhe took an affectionate leave of the children. I ſhall never ſee them more, ſaid ſhe, but it will be no loſs to them; farewell. Her heart Madam, was ready to burſt." ſaid Hannah.

"Richard having got the girl in his arms, bids the little boy follow. Tom, Tom, cried the boy, looking up to the head of the poor bedſtead; poor Tom go too, won't go *'out*, Tom."

"And

"And what ſhould it be, Madam, that he could not ſuffer to ſtay behind, but Mr. Wilmot's pigeon, which his mother had found, in one of her begging-walks, upon the high road, almoſt dead with cold and hunger, and out of pure pity, ſeeing it tame and diſtreſſed, had brought it home with her, and ſheltered and nouriſhed it. You may judge what Mr. Wilmot felt; he ſeized the bird as his prize; and, O cried he, how abundantly does a good-natured action, as the world would call what I have done, for thoſe ſufferers, if fairly ſtated, how does it reward itſelf in a thouſand inſtances! Had not the feelings of a man induced me to enter this cottage; had not my friendſhip for my infant companion, Richard (meaning Mrs. Elliſon) prompted me to bury this act of cruelty, this deſertion of the innocent, in oblivion, by becoming myſelf their benefactor, I had never recovered the bird I hold ſo dear; and you will now bear me witneſs, that I ſhall not give more happineſs than I ſhall receive; but the ill-natured ſtroke of turning the bird adrift, muſt alſo be concealed from my amiable friend's knowledge; it would wound her to the ſoul, if ſhe knew what malice a certain Gentleman is capable of. Malice, did I ſay, revenge, injuſtice, Richard, barbarity, cowardice; for cowards, alone, are ſo hard-natured as to make war upon

upon the defenceleſs. It is a folly to talk, Madam, but poor dear Mr. Wilmot ſhould have been a parſon."

"And what became of the mother?" ſaid Mrs. Overbury.

"You ſhall hear, Madam—And ſo—for what ſignifies denying it—Mr. Wilmot's dark hints about the children, made Richard ſtark mad to know all and about them; but not for the matter of knowing neither, but becauſe he thought it would be a very lame ſtory, with an if and an and, to tell me, unleſs he could ſift it to the bottom; he accordingly ſlipped over the next morning, and, finding the young woman quite pert, he got all out of her, but never let Mr. Wilmot know for fear he ſhould be offended.

"And ſo Mr. Wilmot ſtayed four days longer than he intended, to renew his acquaintance with the pigeon, and ſee how his young family (as a body may ſay) came on; and wrote the letter for you, Madam, and ſent to his aunt, at Eton, to get a light place for the young woman, who ſaid ſhe could work with her needle; and deſired ſhe would write to Richard, when ſhe ſucceeded, who would ſend her up; and ſo Mrs. Wilmot, of Eton, happening herſelf to want juſt ſuch a perſon as her nephew deſcribed, for her own houſe; ſhe was to have went up with a number of pretty little

odds

odds and ends about her, for Mr. Wilmot left a couple of his ſhirts to make her ſome aprons, and a fine cravat for a cap or two, and money to buy her a ſtuff petticoat and a cotton gown, and to pay her journey up; Mrs. Wilmot promiſing to do the reſt towards clothing her decently, as a poor girl that had loſt all her relations; and there ſhe would have lived, and pleaſe you, without doubt, as happy as the day was long; but before a fortnight was all out, her fainting fits returned upon her; and, to make ſhort of a melancholy ſtory, what was to carry her to London, buried her in the pariſh where ſhe died, and the children have been with Richard ever ſince, and no one the wiſer."

"And this horrid creature," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, with her eyes lifted up to heaven, "is the huſband of my gentle, my pure, my benevolent-hearted child!"

"But don't you love Mr. Wilmot?" ſaid Hannah, "and won't you love the children for his ſake?"

"Doubt it not," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "and for their own; but I muſt have his letter, Hannah, could you not go home and fetch it me?"

"Will it not be ominous, Madam," ſaid Hannah, "to poor dear Mr. Wilmot? for you was never to ſee it till he was dead; I am ſure if any harm was to befall him, I ſhould reproach myſelf, and think—"

"He

"He would haunt you, I ſuppoſe," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "what ſilly fears, my good woman, do you entertain! I will be anſwerable for every conſequence."

Hannah ſet off to the lodge; and Mrs. Overbury recollecting the words of Wilmot, when he conſented to write to Elfrida, to promote her union, at the Lieutenant's requeſt, with Elliſon, that he would be their ſon, the ſon of their approbation; adding, "O may I not ſpeak prophetically, but my mind tells me, I ſhall be the ſon of your regret."

"Amiable Wilmot," exclaimed Mrs. Overbury, "the hour of my regret is arrived; the goodneſs of Mr. Overbury's intention ſanctifies his error; but you, and you only could have made my beloved child happy."

Hannah had flown to the lodge, and back like a wood-nymph of the more ruſtic order; "Here it is, ſaid ſhe, "ſealed up with all ceremony; but I do it without Richard's conſent, and he will, perhaps, kill me when he knows it."

"Leave me to ſettle that," ſaid Mrs. Overbury, "no one ever yet ſuffered for obliging me; and I think I ſhall not permit you to be the firſt;" ſo ſaying ſhe broke the ſeal, and read as follows:

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" The Wilmot you ſo kindly honored with your favor and countenance; the Wilmot, whoſe ſoul was your Elfrida's before he knew his diſqualification for looking up to her with hope, or the nature, or the force of his attachment; the Wilmot who ſtruck at his own deareſt wiſhes to promote Captain Overbury's happineſs, and whoſe laſt conſciouſneſs was a prayer for the welfare of her he loved; that Wilmot, beſt of women, now addreſſes you, as it were, from the grave, for this letter, I have commanded, ſhall not reach you until I am no more, in the cauſe of innocence, in the cauſe of unprotected, of worſe than orphan infancy. But ſtart not, when I relate to you to whom they owe their exiſtence and their misfortunes; but with the candor that becomes your character, and the indulgence that diſtinguiſhes your temper, read the ſtory of erring youth, and the ſad cataſtrophe of inconſideration."

" At ſo early an age as ſcarcely to be more than a ſchool-boy, Mr. Overbury's now happy Elliſon, formed an intimacy with an artleſs girl ſtill younger than himſelf; the acquaintance, in its continuance, was not without conſequences, as theſe two children are living teſtimonies, which accident brought to my knowledge, ſoon after his marriage with Miſs Overbury, and removal

moval from the country, in a ſituation that prompted me to become their protector, the agent of Providence in their preſervation.

" The natural diſſipations of a young man, having made Mr. Elliſon forgetful of their infant neceſſities, an inviſible hand led me to the cottage of their diſtreſs, when undiſſembled penitence, and maternal anxiety induced their mother to intruſt me, ſtranger as I was to her, with the tale of her criminal conduct, and its puniſhment.

" In the firſt inſtance, I remembered only their helpleſſneſs, their innocence, and the cruel prejudices of the world, againſt theſe unoffending, and therefore truly unfortunate individuals.

" I was without connexions myſelf, and maſter of the means of juſt ſheltering their heads from the ſtorm; had I lived, their education and their eſtabliſhment ſhould have been the beſt in my power; what was mine I have left them, and, under your benign auſpices, I flatter myſelf they will grow up uſeful members of ſociety.

" Heal then, dear Madam, the youthful tranſgreſſion of your ſon, by becoming the guardian, the friend of theſe defenceleſs children; improve what I could beſtow for their ſupport and future benefit, to advantage, and ſpare your tender Elfrida the knowledge of

of a circumſtance, which would pain her heart, by rendering the man, Mr. Overbury and heaven has made her huſband, too little worthy in her ſight for her tranquillity.

" His youth is the plea that muſt be admitted, and the difference of education between a boy born to humble and to elevated proſpects, taken into the account, if ever you find yourſelf incited to contemplate the contraſt, I may, upon this occaſion, appear to him; for it is impoſſible to judge, had Mr. Elliſon's ſituation been mine, brought up, as he was, with the certainty of an ample inheritance, inſtead of the feeling and the morality your friendſhip may impute to me, how far I might have even exceeded him, in youthful preſumption and youthful impiety; not that I would be underſtood to conſider the ſeduction of a harmleſs girl as a venial offence; but in Mr. Elliſon's caſe, the wicked conduct of the mother, who gave her up to his propoſals, is an extenuating circumſtance, and by the magnitude of her guilt, he ſeems to have claims, in conjunction with his extreme youth, to compaſſion.

" The ſaving of the children for his ſake, for their wretched mother is no more, may be accepted, perhaps, as ſome atonement.

" However, my moſt revered friend (for you have permitted me to call you by that invaluable name) your daughter's peace muſt

muſt be dear to us, her purity and innocence would be ſhocked to mix with, what ſhe would deem, licentiouſneſs and inhumanity; I therefore, make it my laſt requeſt, that I may at once be the humble inſtrument of good to theſe infants, and of obviating ſorrow, in the only inſtance in my power, from the heart of *your*, and when it ſhall be no longer a ſin to call her ſo, *my* Elfrida; and, could my dying wiſhes avail you, you, Madam, ſhould poſſeſs the felicity your mind was formed to taſte, though, for ſome hidden purpoſe, denied you, in the felicity of your moſt amiable, but I fear—can I—ought I to write it, unhappy child. Adieu for ever.

Wilmot."

Mrs. Overbury having recovered the concern which this letter occaſioned her for Elliſon's unworthineſs, and Wilmot's baniſhment, ſhe charged Hannah, as ſhe valued her good opinion and her peace, never to mention a word of what had paſſed between them; but whenever Elliſon ſaid, what ſhe called deadly provoking things, to walk away, and leave the correction of his untoward ſpirit to heaven.

She then ſent the children home, and told Mr. Overbury at his return, that whenever Elfrida went to London, their little neighbors ſhould be their frequent viſitants.

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The poor Lieutenant had borne up againſt every turn of Elliſon's humor with hope; but this laſt ſtroke, which his wife could not long conceal from him, and which ſhe knew he would keep ſecret upon Elfrida's account, againſt infant innocence, and a worthy young man, who was beyond his utmoſt reach, had ſhewn him the depravity of his ſoul in ſuch glaring colorings, that he was ready to expire with repentance of his own conduct reſpecting him.

"An angel and a fiend," ſaid he, "my fatal politics has coupled, not joined, and the bittereſt anguiſh muſt be my portion."

It was late before Elfrida and Elliſon returned, ſo that the children were not mentioned that night, but finding by diſtant hints that Mr. and Mrs. Overbury were determined to take notice of them, Elliſon bent his wiſhes towards London, and aſked Elfrida if ſhe would accompany him.

"Aſſuredly, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "I may have my preference of ſituation, but I ſhall always think it right to reſide where you do, if it be agreeable to you that I ſhould.

"Very little preparation is neceſſary for my departure," ſaid ſhe, "but I muſt beg you will undertake to break the news to my mother, for her tenderneſs will feel our ſeparation."

He

He did ſo; and, though the Lieutenant looked very grave, he did not attempt to diſſuade him; "however, my young Gentleman," ſaid he, "if it be your deſire my wife and I ſhould continue at the Grange, you muſt condeſcend to comply with ſome certain conditions I have to propoſe. You live to your choice, and muſt therefore only deem it fair that I ſhould live to mine. Our income, I need not tell you," continued the Lieutenant, "is ſlender; it, nevertheleſs, enables us to be independent, and you muſt allow me to pay you fifty pounds a year for our board; which, with the viſible ſervices I can render you, will about ſet us even. The idea, Sir, muſt not prevail in the neighborhood, that in our old age we are become dependent."

Elliſon's great ſoul could ill brook this command, as he called it; the Lieutenant was, however, immoveable, and there was no other alternative for him, than to behold his return to town, or to conſent to his reſiding, upon his own terms, in the country; nor did Elfrida's heart diſapprove his reſolution.

This point ſettled, Elliſon and his wife once more bid adieu to the Grange, and, unattended by Hannah, reviſited London.

Elliſon ruſhed into the ſame round of pleaſures and acquaintances as before; and whilſt

whilſt the Lieutenant and Mrs. Overbury were amuſing themſelves with the prattle of infancy, and the labors of benevolence, ſeemed eager to be undone.

They had an elegant houſe, with every elegant appurtenance, though Elliſon had promiſed the Lieutenant to content himſelf with a proper lodging; and Elfrida, in her accuſtomed uniform of good ſenſe and delicate reſerve, mixed with what her huſband called the polite world. But what beyond meaſure aſtoniſhed her was, that the manners of George the Third and his moſt amiable conſort, were *not* the ſtandards of faſhion and of imitation, with all thoſe who called themſelves well-bred; on the contrary, it appeared the univerſal taſte of a misjudging age, to fly off from thoſe firſt great virtues of the human character, piety, ſentiment, conjugal affection, filial reſpect, parental tenderneſs, fraternal attachment, good humor, intereſting amuſements, poliſhed induſtry, and every thing in the article of dreſs genteel and becoming; the marking features of the royal pair, and their royal progeny; ſhe ſighed and turned her eyes from the melancholy contraſt, more and more confirmed in her former opinion, that art, not nature, diſtorted the mind; and that folly, vanity, idleneſs and levity, were leſſons acquired, not the genuine propenſities of the uncorrupted heart.

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With reflections and obſervations ſuch as theſe, did ſhe lament the infatuation of the times, and waited patiently for the ill conſequences of her huſband's extravagant conduct. Once or twice, in the ſofteſt terms, as an act of duty, did ſhe aſk if he was aware of what his ſplendid accommodations would lead to; when being repeatedly anſwered in the affirmative, ſhe forbore every kind of what ſhe was ſenſible would prove unavailing remonſtrance, and only ſecretly prepared herſelf for the event.

END OF VOLUME I.